

Appendix F

Agency and Public Involvement

1. Notices of Intent
 - A. June 22, 2012
 - B. September 7, 2012
2. Public Involvement Plan
3. Agency Coordination Plan
4. Scoping Summary and Scoping Summary Appendix
5. CEQ Pilot Statement of Principles
6. Newsletters Distributed
 - A. Summer 2012
 - B. Spring 2013
 - C. Winter 2013
 - D. Fall 2014
 - E. Summer 2015
7. List of Environmental Justice Organizations Contacted

Notices of Intent

1. June 22, 2012
2. September 7, 2012

The FHWA is currently developing the TNM version 3.0, with anticipated beta-testing of this version towards the end of 2012. Version 3.0 is an entirely new, state-of-the-art computer program used for predicting noise impacts in the vicinity of highways. It uses advances in personal computer hardware and software to improve upon the accuracy and ease of modeling highway noise, including the design of effective, cost-efficient highway noise barriers. This information request is to gather information from the beta-testers on their computer configurations, their experiences using the FHWA TNM and the availability of TNM files.

Respondents: Approximately 25 entities.

Frequency: Once.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: Approximately 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden

Hours: Approximately 6.25 hours.

Public Comments Invited: You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for the FHWA's performance; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burdens; (3) ways for the FHWA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized, including the use of electronic technology, without reducing the quality of the collected information. The agency will summarize and/or include your comments in the request for OMB's clearance of this information collection.

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995; 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued On: June 19, 2012.

Steven Smith,

Chief, Information Technology Division.

[FR Doc. 2012-15362 Filed 6-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast Corridor Between Washington, DC, New York, NY, and Boston, MA

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this Notice of Intent (Notice) to advise the public of the preparation of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

to evaluate potential passenger rail improvements between Washington, DC, New York City, and Boston, MA. FRA is leading the planning and environmental evaluation of the Northeast Corridor (NEC), an effort known as NEC FUTURE, in close coordination with the involved states, Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), Amtrak and other stakeholders. The purpose of the NEC FUTURE program is to define current and future markets for improved rail service and capacity on the NEC, develop an integrated passenger rail transportation solution to incrementally meet those needs, and create a regional planning framework to engage stakeholders throughout the region in the development of the program.

NEC FUTURE is being advanced consistent with the federal High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program and includes the development of a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP). A PRCIP provides the data necessary to support an FRA decision to fund and implement major investments in a passenger rail corridor. A PRCIP is comprised of two components: A Tier 1 EIS and a Service Development Plan (SDP). The Tier 1 EIS will be developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, 40 CFR part 1500 *et seq.*, and will address documentation on a broad corridor level. The SDP articulates the overall scope, alternatives, approach and business case for proposed service and improvements.

As part of the Tier 1 EIS, FRA will evaluate various passenger rail alternatives: A No Action Alternative, consisting of already planned improvements to the corridor, and Build Alternatives consisting of a full array of passenger rail alternatives which could range from operational and service enhancements to new physical improvements. FRA will consider the type, location and need for ancillary facilities for each alternative. The primary passenger rail route is the existing NEC passenger rail spine and its connecting corridors; however, in some areas, FRA may consider alternatives off of the existing NEC.

FRA is issuing this Notice to alert the public and agencies about the preparation of the Tier 1 EIS and associated SDP. To ensure that all significant issues are identified and considered, all interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed scope of environmental review, project purpose and need, alternatives to be

considered, environmental effects to be considered and evaluated, and methodologies to be used for evaluating effects.

DATES: Submit comments by Friday, September 14, 2012. See the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) for information on the scoping meeting dates.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are encouraged to comment on-line at the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com), via email at info@necfuture.com, or in person at the scoping meetings. For Further Information or Special Assistance Contact: Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Policy & Development, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590; by email at info@necfuture.com, or; through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FRA is preparing a Tier 1 EIS and SDP for the NEC FUTURE program. Together the EIS and SDP comprise a PRCIP that will define a comprehensive and integrated passenger rail network in the Northeast region, looking at a range of service types and infrastructure needs, including plans for public investment in projects that contribute towards efficient service and increased capacity for intercity and high-speed passenger rail and freight and commuter rail service. The PRCIP will provide the economic, financial, transportation and environmental analyses necessary to support an investment in improved rail service as a core component of a more integrated, efficient, safer, and higher-capacity Northeast regional transportation network.

The FRA will use a tiered environmental review process for complying with NEPA, as per the CEQ regulations, 40 CFR 1508.28, and in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, 64 FR 28454 (FRA Environmental Procedures). The Tier 1 EIS will also address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 36 CFR Part 800, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303, and other applicable Federal and state laws and regulations. The outcome of the Tier 1 EIS will be to identify markets to be served, service(s), general alignment and station locations.

The NEC FUTURE program is intended to develop a rail transportation investment program to support the Northeast region's economic competitiveness and growth potential

with energy-efficient and sustainable transportation services. For purposes of defining and analyzing transportation alternatives for NEC FUTURE, the study area has been broadly defined to encompass the region served by the NEC, plus those areas that can be reached from the NEC directly by train or via a single transfer to connecting corridors (e.g., the Empire Corridor in New York). The study area may be refined as the NEC FUTURE program progresses and off-corridor alternatives are identified.

Purpose and Need

The Northeast region is served by an extensive intermodal passenger and freight transportation system of highways, airports, ports, intercity, commuter and freight rail, and public transit systems. However, that transportation system lacks sufficient capacity or redundancy to support local and inter-regional mobility needs, resulting in major congestion and delays. Many components of the system are in a state of disrepair or, worse, have reached the point of obsolescence.

The need for the project is founded in the importance of mobility to the continued economic vitality of the Northeast region, coupled with projected population, economic and travel demand growth. Without investment, the limitations of the region's transportation network will constrain the growth, competitiveness and economic development of the region. The focus of NEC FUTURE is the rail network, an important component of the transportation network, and its role in providing and improving regional mobility.

Alternatives To Be Considered

The Tier 1 EIS will evaluate preliminary alternatives including a No Action Alternative and various Build Alternatives. The No Action Alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of all alternatives. The No Action Alternative will draw upon State Transportation Improvement Programs and existing intercity passenger, commuter and freight rail plans as well as planned highway and air network improvements. The Tier 1 EIS will develop and evaluate a range of reasonable Build Alternatives. The Build Alternatives will be developed at a corridor level and will address travel markets, services, operations, general alignments and station locations. Build Alternatives could include physical improvements to the NEC spine to increase capacity, enhance safety, modernize the infrastructure, improve reliability and reduce trip time. Other

alternatives could also be service- or operation-related that provide rail service to new markets or change existing patterns of service. In addition, there may be Build Alternatives off the existing NEC spine or its connecting corridors.

Possible Effects

FRA will evaluate direct, indirect and cumulative changes to the social, economic, and physical environment, including land use and socioeconomic conditions, ecological resources, water resources, cultural resources, hazardous contamination, transportation, air quality, noise and vibration at a level commensurate with a Tier 1 EIS. Analysis will be consistent with NEPA, CEQ regulations, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, FRA Environmental Procedures, applicable state environmental regulations, and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, along with other applicable Federal and State regulations.

Scoping Process

The FRA is inviting comments and suggestions from all interested parties regarding the scope of the Tier 1 EIS to ensure that all uses are addressed related to this proposal and that any significant impacts are identified. Please direct comments or questions concerning the proposed action and the Tier 1 EIS to the FRA at the above address. FRA will send letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments to the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, Native American tribes and to private organizations that might have previously expressed or that are known to have an interest in this proposal.

FRA is leading the outreach activities with agency and public meetings occurring in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. The meetings and other public involvement initiatives, including newsletters and outreach, will be held throughout the course of this study. Dates, times and locations for the scoping meetings and other opportunities for public participation will be announced on the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) and through mailings, notices, advertisements and press releases. In addition, the scoping meeting presentation will be available on the NEC FUTURE Web site along with a scoping package that can also be obtained upon request by contacting

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the mailing address above or electronically at info@necfuture.com.

Comments will be accepted on the scoping of the EIS in meetings, through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) and by submitting written comments to Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the address above. The formal comment period for scoping will be open from the date of this Notice until Friday, September 14, 2012.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 18, 2012.

John Tunna,

Director of the Office of Research and Development, Federal Railroad Administration.

[FR Doc. 2012-15241 Filed 6-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[DOT Docket No. NHTSA-2011-0084]

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Request for public comment on proposed collection of information.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), on June 24, 2011 (76 FR 37189) the agency published a 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** soliciting public comment on the proposed information collection abstracted below.

In further compliance with the PRA, the agency now publishes this second notice announcing the submission of its proposed collection to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and notifying the public about how to submit comments on the proposed collection to OMB during the 30-day comment period.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 23, 2012.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments [identified by Docket No. DOT-NHTSA-2011-0084] through one of the following methods:

- **Internet Submission:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- **Mail or Hand Delivery:** Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Elizabeth M. Murphy, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File No. SR-C2-2012-024. This file number should be included on the subject line if email is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Web site (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for Web site viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of C2. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File No. SR-C2-2012-024 and should be submitted on or before September 28, 2012.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.³¹

Kevin M. O'Neill,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2012-22059 Filed 9-6-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Railroad Administration****Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast Corridor Between Washington, DC, New York, NY, and Boston, MA**

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of intent to extend the formal comment period for scoping to October 19, 2012.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this Notice of Intent (Notice) to advise the public and Federal, state, and local agencies of the extension of the formal comment period for the NEC FUTURE program scoping process. The Notice of Intent to prepare a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential passenger rail improvements between Washington, DC, New York City, and Boston, MA was published in the **Federal Register** on June 22, 2012. The formal comment period for scoping was scheduled to close on Friday, September 14, 2012. In response to requests from the public provided in public testimony at Scoping meetings held from August 13th through August 22nd at nine different venues between Washington, DC and Boston, Massachusetts, FRA has decided to extend the formal comment period until Friday, October 19, 2012. **DATES:** Comment period extended from Friday, September 14, 2012 to Friday, October 19, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are encouraged to comment on-line at the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com), via email at info@necfuture.com, or by mail at the address below. For Further Information or Special Assistance Contact: Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Policy & Development, Mail Stop 20, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590; by email at info@necfuture.com; or through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FRA is leading the planning and environmental evaluation of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) in close coordination with the involved states, Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), Amtrak, and other stakeholders. The purpose of the NEC FUTURE program is to define current and future markets for improved rail service and capacity on the NEC, develop an integrated passenger rail transportation solution to incrementally meet those needs, and create a regional planning framework to engage stakeholders throughout the region in the development of the program.

The materials that were presented at the Scoping meetings held from August 13th to August 22nd, including a narrated PowerPoint presentation and display boards, will be available on the NEC FUTURE Web site

(www.necfuture.com). To ensure that all significant issues are identified and considered, all interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed scope of environmental review, project purpose and need, alternatives to be considered, environmental effects to be considered and evaluated, and methodologies to be used for evaluating effects. Persons with limited internet access may request a hard copy of the Public Scoping meeting materials by contacting Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the mailing address above. Please direct comments or questions concerning the proposed action and the Tier 1 EIS to the FRA at the above address.

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 31, 2012.

Paul Nissenbaum,

Associate Administrator of Rail Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration.

[FR Doc. 2012-22060 Filed 9-6-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Transit Administration****Notice of Meeting of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS)**

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a public meeting of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS). TRACS is a Federal Advisory Committee established by the Secretary of Transportation in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act to provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary and the Federal Transit Administrator on matters relating to the safety of public transportation systems.

DATES: The TRACS meeting will be held on September 20, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and September 21, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Contact Iyon Rosario (see contact information below) by September 13, 2012, if you wish to be added to the visitor's list to gain access to the Washington Navy Yard Conference Center.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Washington Navy Yard Conference Center (Navy Yard), Building 211, 1454 Parsons Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20374. Attendees who are on the visitor's/security list can access all three gates (6th St, 9th St, 11th St) by presenting a photo ID to gain entrance to the Navy Yard. The gate in closest

³¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

Public Involvement Plan



Public Involvement Plan

September 12, 2012
Final Version

Submitted by:



Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	PROJECT OVERVIEW.....	3
3.	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS	5
4.	STAKEHOLDERS AND POTENTIALLY AFFECTED GROUPS.....	5
4.1	GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS.....	5
4.1.1	<i>Federal Transportation Agencies.....</i>	6
4.1.2	<i>Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission.....</i>	6
4.1.3	<i>State and Federal Environmental Agencies.....</i>	6
4.1.4	<i>Other State-Level Agencies and Organizations</i>	6
4.1.5	<i>Local Jurisdictions.....</i>	6
4.1.6	<i>Metropolitan Planning Organizations.....</i>	6
4.2	RAILROAD AND TRANSIT OPERATORS.....	7
4.3	OTHER TRANSPORTATION ENTITIES	7
4.4	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.....	7
4.5	GENERAL PUBLIC.....	8
4.6	RAIL PASSENGERS AND OTHER INTERCITY TRAVELERS.....	8
4.7	ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS	8
5.	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES	9
5.1	COMMUNICATION TOOLS	9
5.2	STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC MEETINGS	11
5.3	PUBLIC OUTREACH IN SUPPORT OF THE TIER 1 EIS	11
5.4	PROPOSED OUTREACH METHODS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP	12
5.5	PHASE 1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MILESTONES	13
5.6	PHASES 2 AND 3	14
6.	AGENCY COORDINATION	15
7.	DOCUMENTATION	15

Tables

TABLE 1:	PROPOSED PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT METHODS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP.....	13
----------	---	----

Figures

FIGURE 1:	PRELIMINARY STUDY AREA	2
FIGURE 2:	PROJECT SCHEDULE – PHASE 1.....	3
FIGURE 3:	PROJECT SCHEDULE – PHASES 2 AND 3	4

1. Introduction

The Northeast region has one of the most extensive multi-modal passenger and freight transportation systems in the world—highways, airports, ports, intercity and commuter rail, and public transit serving all major cities and many intermediate markets. However, despite significant investment over decades in all modes, the region still faces major congestion and capacity constraints. These constraints, if not addressed, have the potential to curtail future mobility and economic growth and place the Northeast at a competitive disadvantage to other regions of the U.S. and the world.

The goal of NEC FUTURE is to prepare a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP) for Washington-Boston Northeast Corridor. The PRCIP, consisting of a Service Development Plan (SDP) that articulates the overall scope and approach for proposed service and Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS),¹ will define an integrated, comprehensive passenger rail transportation solution for the Northeast. The purpose of this solution is to improve mobility, effectively serve travel demand due to population and jobs growth, support economic development, reduce growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contribute to improved land utilization and investment in both urban and non-urban communities in the region.

Extensive public dialogue is critical to the development of a valid and viable Corridor Investment Plan. The scale and diversity of the region (see Figure 1), the large number of organizations and jurisdictions potentially interested in NEC FUTURE, and the array of issues to be considered demand a broad, multi-faceted outreach program. In addition, to avoid confusion, public outreach materials will need to distinguish NEC FUTURE from related initiatives, such as Amtrak’s long-range plans and a variety of near-term construction projects planned or underway along the corridor.

The public outreach program will be conducted in compliance with FRA policies and regulations, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and related regulations, including the Council on Environmental Quality’s regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Section 1500-1508), Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, and the Final DOT Environmental Justice Order 5610.2A, released on May 2, 2012.

¹ More detailed, site-specific environmental review of the resulting project(s) is not included at this stage, but would occur separately as part of a Tier 2 environmental document.

Figure 1: Preliminary Study Area



This Public Involvement Plan outlines goals for the public involvement program and the approaches that will be used to engage key stakeholders and the general public in the NEC FUTURE program. It provides a framework for more detailed action plans and activity schedules that will be tailored to specific audiences, locations, and phases of the project. In Phase 1, for example, action plans will include a list of key stakeholder meetings and briefings to occur from May through July 2012; a plan for the development of the project website showing the proposed structure, schedule and review process to be followed, and a detailed logistical plan and schedule for the scoping meetings to occur as part of the Tier 1 EIS process.

The Public Involvement Plan will be reviewed and updated at key points in the project.

2. Project Overview

NEC FUTURE is being conducted in three phases. Phase 1 includes the development of a Purpose and Need Statement, the initial development of alternatives, and the Scoping process for the Tier 1 EIS. Phases 2 and 3 include completion of the Tier 1 EIS and Service Development Plan. Figure 2 shows the overall project schedule for Phase 1, and Figure 3 shows a combined schedule for Phases 2 and 3. The public involvement process is intended to be continuous throughout all three phases.

Figure 2: Project Schedule – Phase 1

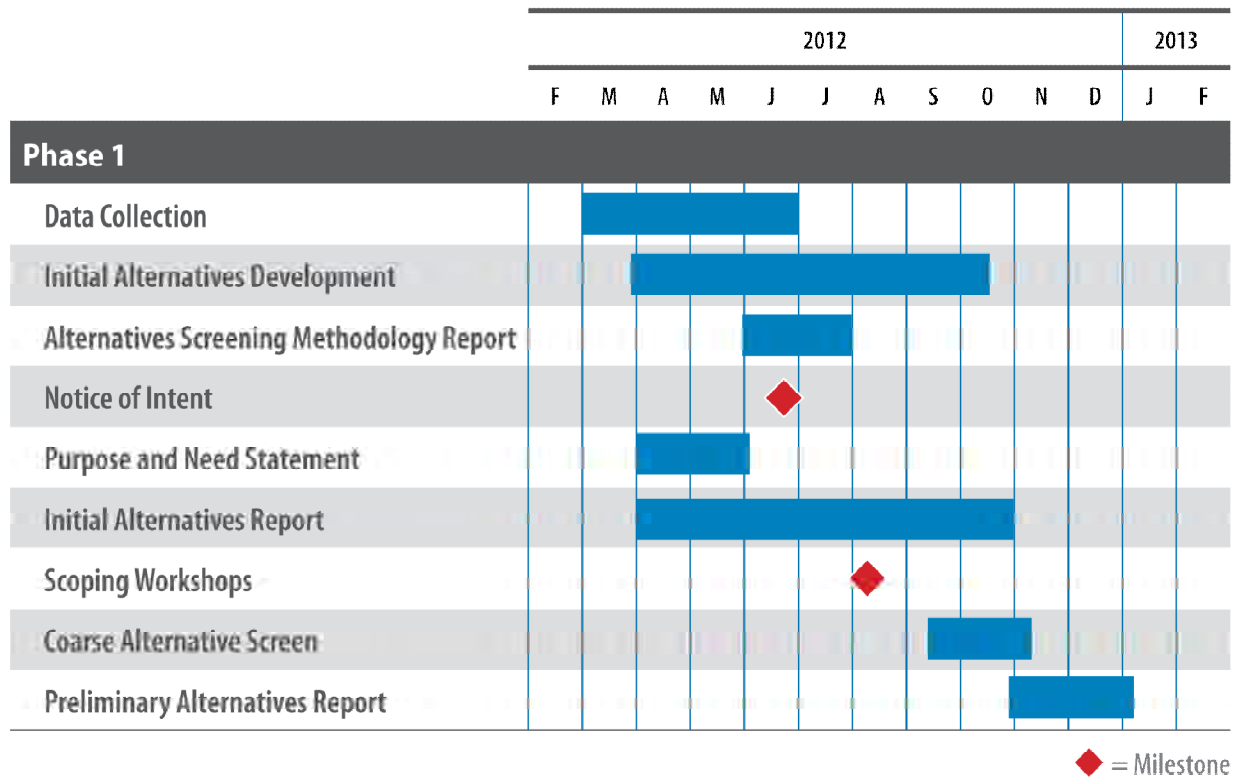
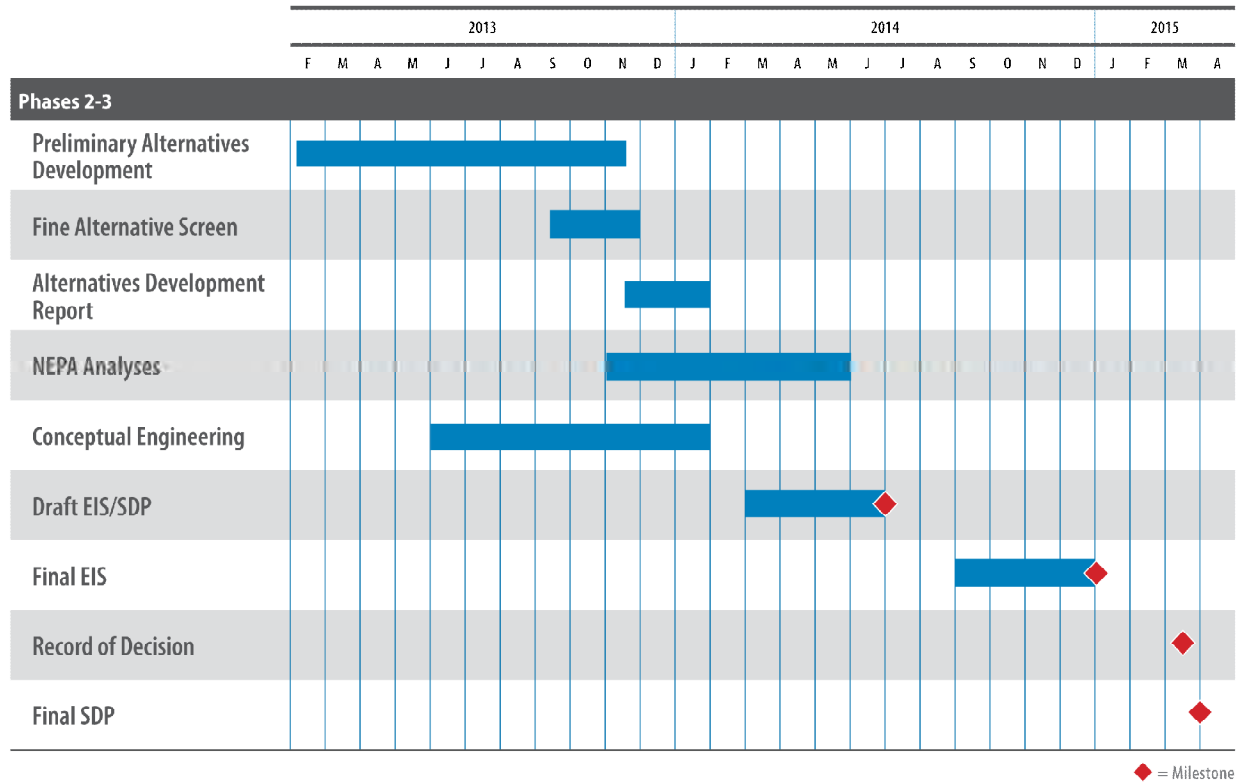


Figure 3: Project Schedule – Phases 2 and 3



NEC FUTURE is a complex, multi-disciplinary effort involving numerous participants. In order to support informed dialogue and effectively contribute to decision-making, public involvement activities will be closely integrated with the technical process. The project team has been structured to promote a high level of integration. For example, the Public Involvement coordinator serves on the core project leadership team, participates in weekly coordination meetings, and communicates with project management and technical leads on a daily basis.

Information gained through stakeholder and public engagement will be communicated to the project team on a regular basis. This will enable each project discipline to integrate public concerns into the work process and to utilize the public involvement process to engage key stakeholders, collect data, and understand public and stakeholder concerns. The work of each major technical project discipline will be reviewed at key stages by a Technical Working Group (TWG), consisting of USDOT and other experts, to provide input and validate approaches and results. In Phase 1, four TWGs have been formed: Alternatives Development, Environmental Analysis, Operations and Service, and Ridership and Revenue.

3. Public Involvement Goals

The following goals have been identified for public involvement in NEC FUTURE:

- ▶ Provide accurate information to the public about existing conditions, issues and options for rail service in the Northeast.
- ▶ Offer convenient and varied avenues for stakeholders and the public to learn about and participate in NEC FUTURE.
- ▶ Involve a broad, inclusive and representative set of stakeholders, organizations, and residents from throughout the study area as a basis for informed decisions.
- ▶ Engage stakeholders and the public in helping to define the issues to be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS for NEC FUTURE.
- ▶ Develop alternatives that reflect public priorities for improved service.
- ▶ Promote open and transparent discussion of alternatives and their potential impacts.
- ▶ Foster common understanding and agreement on the process for screening and selecting alternatives.
- ▶ Provide timely responses to public and stakeholder concerns about alternatives, the planning process and decision-making.
- ▶ Foster a broad regional agreement on an approach to future rail service.
- ▶ Provide convenient ways for interested parties to comment.
- ▶ Accommodate persons with disabilities and non-English speakers in the public involvement process.
- ▶ Accurately document public comments and responses in accordance with NEPA requirements.

4. Stakeholders and Potentially Affected Groups

The public involvement process for NEC FUTURE seeks to inform and engage a wide range of potential stakeholders and interested groups. Target audiences include governmental and non-governmental organizations, railroads and transit operators, rail and intercity passengers, the general public, and Environmental Justice populations, among others.

4.1 GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

Governmental stakeholders include federal and state transportation and environmental agencies, elected officials at all levels of government, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), and county and local governments.

4.1.1 Federal Transportation Agencies

The FRA will take the lead in involving other federal agencies and transportation modal administrations in the planning process through periodic meetings and briefings.

4.1.2 Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission

A unique avenue for collaboration with key stakeholders is the recently formed Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission). The NEC Commission includes representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Amtrak, the District of Columbia and each of the eight states the Northeast Corridor serves: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. It also includes non-voting representatives of four freight railroads: Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), CSX, Norfolk Southern and the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company, as well as non-voting representatives of the states of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Virginia and North Carolina and of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NY-MTA). Regular coordination meetings with this key partner are planned throughout the project. The NEC Commission is also conducting a public outreach process in line with its mandate, which is distinct from, but closely related to, that of NEC FUTURE. As plans progress, opportunities for joint outreach activities may be considered.

4.1.3 State and Federal Environmental Agencies

Also unique to this effort is the opportunity for early partnership with environmental resource agencies through a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Pilot Program that includes the development of the Tier 1 EIS being performed for the NEC FUTURE. This federal initiative is designed to provide for early outreach and coordination with federal and state resource agencies, laying the groundwork for subsequent Tier 2 project-level environmental reviews and permitting on an expedited basis.

4.1.4 Other State-Level Agencies and Organizations

Individual meetings, telephone contacts and teleconferences will be held with key state and other stakeholders as requested and as otherwise required to provide the information and dialogue they need to participate in the planning process. This will include outreach to the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG).

4.1.5 Local Jurisdictions

The study area includes numerous county and local jurisdictions, including jurisdictions with existing stations along the NEC mainline, station locations on connecting lines, potential future station locations, and non-station jurisdictions potentially affected by future construction. Outreach to local jurisdictions may include meetings, videoconferences, informational mailings or e-mail communications. Individual meetings will be sought with mayoral and/or transportation staff for the NEC's largest cities.

4.1.6 Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Opportunities for meetings or briefings will also be sought with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) along the corridor. The MPOs also serve as an additional mechanism for

communicating with many of the county and local jurisdictions in the corridor who are represented on their respective MPOs.

4.2 RAILROAD AND TRANSIT OPERATORS

Rail operators are another critical stakeholder category for the plan. Discussions with Amtrak will occur both via individual meetings and through coordination with the NEC Commission. There are nine commuter rail operators and seven freight railroads on the NEC, as well as several connecting rail service operators. A combination of individual and group meetings and teleconferences are planned to ensure that the perspectives and insights of each of these operators, and future improvement and expansion initiatives, are taken into account as alternatives are formulated and evaluated. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to discuss the key models, methodologies, and technical studies to be performed so that all parties can develop a common understanding of the technical approach. In addition, the project's Technical Working Groups will include representatives from passenger and freight operations.

4.3 OTHER TRANSPORTATION ENTITIES

Other transportation entities that are potential plan stakeholders include airports and airlines, ports, intercity bus operators, private transit operators, and highway agencies. The state departments of transportation (DOTs) are well represented on the NEC Commission, but outreach may be needed to non-DOT agencies such as toll authorities. A key issue will be to fully understand plans for expansion of other modes, including new technologies that may change the way other modes operate or constraints that limit capacity. Outreach methods will include individual or small group meetings, telephone contacts, teleconferences or mailings as appropriate to the specific entities involved.

4.4 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A variety of non-governmental organizations are potential stakeholders for NEC FUTURE:

- ▶ Business, economic development and tourism organizations
- ▶ Private developers
- ▶ Environmental and land conservation organizations
- ▶ Rail passenger advocacy groups
- ▶ Rail labor
- ▶ Transportation/infrastructure coalitions, including existing groups formed to address transportation needs
- ▶ Universities, private foundations, and other institutional interests
- ▶ Auto clubs
- ▶ Community-based organizations

- ▶ Civic organizations
- ▶ Historic preservation groups

The project website, e-newsletter and e-mail updates, social media, webinars, and public meetings are among the avenues that will be used to engage these types of organizations.

4.5 GENERAL PUBLIC

The plan will also be of interest to a variety of unaffiliated citizens and residents who live or work near the rail line or depend on NEC rail service, including persons concerned about potential project impacts such as noise or safety. If alternatives are developed that would involve new off-corridor alignments, methods will be needed to inform and involve the general public in the potentially affected areas. In Phase 1, the project website, newsletters, and public Scoping meetings are envisioned as the primary avenues for communicating with and seeking comments from the general public. In Phase 2, other avenues for involvement may include public forums or workshops, virtual meetings or webinars, and media communications.

4.6 RAIL PASSENGERS AND OTHER INTERCITY TRAVELERS

Regular rail passengers (whether long-distance, short-haul intercity or commuter) are another significant stakeholder category. The perspectives of non-rail travelers, such as those who regularly fly or drive to destinations within the NEC, are also important to consider. Outreach methods may include targeted communications such as social media or focus groups.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, requires federal agencies to ensure greater public participation from communities with substantial minority and/or low-income populations. The policy directives of the EO were affirmed in the Final Department of Transportation Environmental Justice Order 5610.2A, released on May 2, 2012. To this end, this outreach program will include targeted methods of engaging low-income and minority residents and communities.

A demographic profile of the study area will be developed to allow for identification of communities with substantial minority or low-income populations, using threshold(s) to be developed as part of the overall methodology for Environmental Justice analysis in the Tier I EIS. Established groups representing minority or low-income populations in these areas will then be identified, along with appropriate methods for engaging them. In Phase 1, the primary methods will be 1) informational communications with groups that represent targeted communities, and 2) providing targeted publicity for the public Scoping meetings, using information channels such as newspapers serving minority populations in the areas where Scoping meetings are to be held. In Phases 2 and 3, if community issues arise or potential socioeconomic impacts are identified that require more focused engagement of Environmental Justice populations, additional public involvement methods

will be developed. Depending on the nature of the issues or potential impacts identified, these could include issue-oriented advisory groups or community workshops, for example. Representatives of low-income and minority communities will also be included in regional advisory groups that may be convened for the project and invited to participate in public forums and workshops that may occur.

For persons with limited English proficiency, materials may be translated and interpretation services offered at meetings based on advance needs assessment. Communication materials such as newsletters may be translated as necessary. In addition, the NEC FUTURE project website will integrate Google Translate to allow viewers to translate website content into multiple languages.

5. Public Involvement Activities

A variety of activities are planned to accomplish the goals of this Public Involvement Plan and to engage each of the categories of stakeholders identified previously. These activities will be timed and framed to support project team efforts to develop alternatives and undertake the environmental review conducted as part of the Tier 1 EIS. Many activities, such as the development of communications materials, will be corridor-wide in nature. Others, such as meeting preparations and certain types of organizational briefings, will be coordinated on a regional basis, with three regions defined as follows:

- ▶ North: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut
- ▶ Central: New York, New Jersey
- ▶ South: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia

Project communications and opportunities for public involvement will be provided in a consistent manner across all three regions.

A Public Involvement Regional Lead has been designated to coordinate public outreach activities in each of the three regions, with the support of subconsultant firms in each location. The following activities and tools are planned for Phase 1 of the project.

5.1 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The following communication tools will be developed to support the public outreach and environmental review process. Tools will be utilized flexibly as appropriate to the project phase, region and issues under consideration. Project communications will use a common name, logo and color scheme for ready identification and to enhance public awareness.

Website – A website is intended to be the primary portal for informing the public and stakeholders about the project, as well as soliciting comments about the project. The following features are planned for the website:

- ▶ Home page with project overview and navigation buttons
- ▶ Project purpose, history, schedule and background information
- ▶ Information on related initiatives, including those of the NEC Commission, Amtrak's plans, and near-term rail improvement projects currently planned or underway on the corridor
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions
- ▶ Study area maps
- ▶ Alternatives development and screening process
- ▶ Information on upcoming meetings and public comment periods
- ▶ "Virtual meeting" area with displays and handouts provided at public meetings
- ▶ Document library for public versions of reports, such as Draft EIS when available
- ▶ News area/media kit
- ▶ Comment form that allows users to generate comments (which are forwarded to identified project team members for recording and where needed, follow-up)
- ▶ Mailing list sign-up for periodic e-mail updates

The website will be designed for compliance with Section 508 accessibility guidelines. Select web pages will be designed in a format suitable for mobile devices, to accommodate persons who primarily access the internet through cell phones as well as travelers. The website will be updated frequently to provide current information.

Contact Database/Mailings – A master contact database will be created and updated throughout the project using CommentSense, a proprietary, custom, stakeholder database and comment management tool. The database will be used to generate mailings and e-mail alerts, as well as to manage and respond to comments received through the project website.

Fact Sheets and Newsletters – A newsletter/e-newsletter is planned to keep stakeholders and the public up to date on project developments and solicit input. The newsletter will be developed to coincide with key milestones, approximately quarterly. A single-page, illustrated fact sheet will also be prepared for distribution at meetings and briefings; additional, topical fact sheets may be developed as warranted. The newsletter and fact sheets will also be posted on the website.

Presentation – A slide presentation suitable for general audiences will be developed and updated at major milestones. This presentation will provide an overview of the project, goals, background, planning process, key decisions to be made, the status of major tasks, and avenues for participation.

Social Media – A social media communication program will be developed for the project. This may include the use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube videos, and a Quick Response (QR) Code to direct interested persons to the project website.

Media Program – A media program will be developed by the FRA to provide the media with project updates, press releases, and media outreach events to coincide with major project milestones. A media kit will be prepared for distribution at media events and posting on the project website.

5.2 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

A variety of meetings and briefings will be held throughout each phase to provide for dialogue and timely exchange of information. Each meeting will have an identified purpose and an expected outcome, with the goal of making each activity as effective as possible. Generally, the meetings will create opportunities to share information on the project, and to obtain input or feedback on study elements or findings, and insight and guidance from stakeholders toward improving the study process and integrity of findings.

All public meetings will be held at convenient times in locations that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, and where feasible, transit-served. Accommodations will be made for persons with special needs.

Key Stakeholder Interviews will be held with identified stakeholders during Phase 1; some of these may take the form of small group discussions. The purpose of the interviews will be to engage these groups on the scope of the study, the definition of alternatives, the identification of issues of concern to their constituencies, identification of other stakeholders to be consulted, and preferred methods for engaging them as the project moves forward.

Organizational Briefings will be made to selected groups, using the groups' standing meetings where possible.

Informal Topical Workshops/Focus Groups may be used to address issues of local significance such as Transit-Oriented Development, business investment, and resource protection opportunities.

Regional Advisory Groups may be formed toward the conclusion of Phase 1 or early in Phase 2 to address identified concerns in greater detail. These groups would meet as needed to resolve issues such as concerns about service patterns, alignments, or stations. Other such groups might include a Freight Advisory Group.

Virtual Meetings/Webinars may be used to share information and facilitate dialogue among project stakeholders.

5.3 PUBLIC OUTREACH IN SUPPORT OF THE TIER 1 EIS

The public involvement program is designed to support the environmental review process for the Tier 1 EIS. During Phase 1, it is anticipated that the process will include development of presentations, display boards, handouts, and fact sheets as well as media and website updates to support the following activities:

- ▶ Notice of Intent – Public notice of the intent to prepare an environmental document forms a key communication tool in Phase 1. The Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on June 22, 2012.
- ▶ Scoping – Scoping is an opportunity for agencies and the public to provide input on project issues and alternatives to be considered in the environmental review and is one of the primary tasks of Phase 1. The Scoping period will begin with the publication of the NOI on June 22, 2012, and conclude on September 14, 2012. A detailed Scoping Package explaining the process has been prepared and posted on the project website.

Nine Scoping meetings are planned in Phase 1 for the Tier 1 EIS—one in each corridor state and the District of Columbia, with an agency meeting held during the day and a public meeting during the late afternoon/evening. These meetings will be held during a two-week period beginning August 13, 2012. Public Scoping meetings will include display stations with presentation boards in an open house format, and will include a short presentation and opportunity for formal public comment. The meetings will be publicized through newspaper advertisements, news releases and media alerts, e-mail notices, print communications, and mailings.

A list of agencies to be invited to the agency Scoping meeting in each state and the District of Columbia will be developed in coordination with the respective points of contact on the NEC Commission and CEQ Pilot participants. Agency Scoping invitees are anticipated to include Federal agencies, transportation agencies, environmental agencies, MPOs, counties and selected local jurisdictions.

Comments submitted by planning and regulatory agencies and the general public will be documented and a summary of key issues will be prepared.

- ▶ Purpose and Need Statement – A Purpose and Need Statement for the project will be developed and confirmed through the Scoping process. The final Purpose and Need Statement will provide a basis for evaluating the alternatives. At scoping meetings and during the public comment period, the public will have an opportunity to comment on the Purpose and Need Statement before it is finalized, allowing the public to help shape the issues to be addressed in NEC FUTURE.
- ▶ Development of Alternatives – The development of alternatives includes developing screening criteria, identifying and screening initial alternatives, and identifying preliminary alternatives. A Technical Working Group (TWG) has been formed to help guide this process. Agency and public input on alternatives will be solicited through a variety of methods which may include regional workshops, regional or topical advisory groups, e-mail and social media communications, as well as coordination with stakeholders.

5.4 PROPOSED OUTREACH METHODS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Table 1 provides a preliminary listing of the proposed outreach and engagement methods for each of the major stakeholder groups identified in this Public Involvement Plan. This information is subject to change as specific details and activity schedules are developed.

TABLE 1: PROPOSED PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT METHODS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Stakeholder/Group	Principal Engagement Methods
Federal Agencies	Meetings and briefings
NEC Commission	Biweekly Committee coordination meetings
Elected Officials (federal and state)	Legislative briefings, public scoping meetings
Environmental Resource Agencies	Consultation through CEQ Pilot; agency scoping meetings; e-mail updates
State Transportation Agencies	Individual meetings and representation through NEC Commission; agency scoping meetings
Major cities and station cities on existing NEC mainline	Meetings and briefings, agency scoping meetings, e-mail updates, or webinars
Other local governments	Representation through states and MPOs
County governments	Agency Scoping meetings, representation through MPOs
Metropolitan Planning Organizations	Individual meetings and briefings; agency scoping meetings, webinars or videoconferences; e-mail updates
Amtrak, rail and transit operators	Introductory webinar in conjunction with initial data collection efforts, followed by individual and group meetings
Freight railroads	Individual meetings; coordination with NEC Commission Freight Committee
Airports, airlines, bus operators, ports, and non-DOT highway agencies	Briefings, e-newsletters, representation in regional workshops or advisory groups
Non-governmental organizations: business, economic development, and tourism organizations; environmental/conservation, rail passenger advocacy groups, rail labor, transportation coalitions, auto clubs, civic organizations, community-based organizations and historic preservation groups, etc.	E-mail broadcasts directing attention to project website and other avenues for participation; e-newsletters, social media, public scoping meetings
General public	Website, social media, public scoping meetings
Rail passengers and intercity travelers	Website, social media, public scoping meetings
Environmental Justice populations	Informational mailings or e-mail outreach to representative advocacy groups in areas with substantial identified minority or low-income populations; targeted publicity for public scoping meetings using minority media; social media; translation and interpretation services

5.5 PHASE 1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MILESTONES

The following milestone dates for public involvement tasks are based on the overall project schedule for NEC FUTURE. Initial stakeholder interviews and briefings have begun and stakeholder meetings will be ongoing throughout Phase 1. Initial coordination with regulatory agencies began in April 2012 through the CEQ Pilot Program. Biweekly coordination with the NEC Commission has begun and will continue throughout this phase.

▶ Key Stakeholder Interviews	March 2012 – July 2012
▶ Meetings with partner organizations and rail operators	March 2012 – July 2012
▶ Website Launch	June 2012
▶ Tier I EIS Notice of Intent	June 2012
▶ Social Media Communications	July 2012 – January 2013
▶ Periodic E-mail Broadcasts	July 2012 – January 2013
▶ Newsletter #1	August 2012
▶ Agency Scoping Meetings	August 2012
▶ Public Scoping Meetings	August 2012
▶ Newsletter #2	November 2012
▶ Regional/Topical Outreach Meetings	October – February 2012
▶ Newsletter #3	January/February 2013

5.6 PHASES 2 AND 3

Phase 2 will involve two primary activities: continued work on the development and screening of alternatives begun in Phase 1, selection of a preferred set of alternatives, and environmental assessment of the alternatives. A key goal for Phase 2 is to develop broad agreement regarding both the screening process and the selection of alternatives.

Phase 2 will include a series of alternatives workshops and public hearings on the Draft EIS.

This Public Involvement Plan will be updated toward the end of Phase 1 with detail for the subsequent phases. Based on the experience with Phase 1, the methods used will be reviewed and decisions will be made about which to continue, which to discontinue or modify, and what new strategies to initiate.

The following activities are part of the “toolbox” for consideration in Phases 2 and 3:

- ▶ Project video(s) providing an overview of the corridor issues, options and planning process
- ▶ Informational posters/kiosks at rail stations
- ▶ Regional advisory groups convened to address specific regional or localized issues that may emerge during Scoping or early in the Alternatives Development process, such as potential service configurations, infrastructure issues, or new alignments
- ▶ Topical advisory groups convened to address cross-cutting issues such as future freight needs, rail-airport access, or program financing
- ▶ Informal topical workshops on issues such as station access, rail safety, ridership estimates
- ▶ Informal public forums

- ▶ Electronic town hall meeting(s)
- ▶ Videoconferencing, informational webinars, live chats
- ▶ Media outreach/interviews with senior FRA officials
- ▶ 3D visualization with GoogleEarth or similar tools
- ▶ Interactive auto-launched CD/DVD report documents

6. Agency Coordination

The agency coordination process for the Tier 1 EIS will occur in parallel with the overall public involvement program. Proactive and early coordination with federal and state resource agencies will be afforded by participation in the CEQ Pilot. Cooperating and participating agencies may be identified and additional coordination will occur via individual agency meetings, briefings, and correspondence.

A protocol will be developed for consultation with federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments, following the process specified by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. All tribal consultation will be conducted by the Federal Railroad Administration.

7. Documentation

Along with engaging the public for better decision-making, one of the vital functions of a public involvement program is to provide a fully documented project record of how and why decisions were made. To this end, the public involvement process and the issues raised by stakeholders and the public will be documented and summarized throughout the project. Ideas and concerns raised by the public will be shared with all project team members so that they can be appropriately integrated into both the planning and environmental elements of the project. A periodic summary of issues will be circulated to the project team for consideration.

A CommentSense database will be used to track and monitor comments and responses, including all public comments provided during Scoping and on the Draft EIS, whether they are submitted through the website, at meetings and hearings, or by mail. The database will provide a detailed record of individual comments, including the source, content, and status of comments, and will be used to generate a comment/response log and summary.

Agency Coordination Plan



Agency Coordination Plan

May 13, 2013
Final

Submitted by:



Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION..... 1**
 - 1.1 BACKGROUND.....1
 - 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN3
- 2. LEAD AND COOPERATING FEDERAL AGENCIES 4**
- 3. REGULATIONS WITH SPECIFIC CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS 4**
- 4. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION DURING PHASE 1 5**
 - 4.1 INVOLVED AGENCIES5
 - 4.2 COORDINATION WITH INVOLVED AGENCIES9
 - 4.2.1 *NEPA Scoping*.....9
 - 4.2.2 *CEQ Pilot Program*10
 - 4.2.3 *Section 106 Process and Government-to-Government Consultation*.....12
- 5. AGENCY COORDINATION ACTIVITIES DURING PHASES 2 AND 3 13**
 - 5.1.1 *NEPA Process*13
 - 5.1.2 *Section 106 Process and Government-to-Government Consultation*.....14

Tables

- TABLE 1: AGENCY COORDINATION PLANS AND OUTREACH..... 8
- TABLE 2: AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE CEQ PILOT PROGRAM 11
- TABLE 3: FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES 12
- TABLE 4: AGENCY COORDINATION ACTIVITIES 15

Figures

- FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA..... 2
- FIGURE 2: PHASES OF NEC FUTURE PROGRAM 3

Acronyms

Term	Acronym
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	ACHP
Consulting Party	CP
Council on Environmental Quality	CEQ
Endangered Species Act	ESA
environmental impact statement	EIS
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	USEPA
Federal Railroad Administration	FRA
Federally recognized Indian tribes	Indian tribes
High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail	HSIPR
Memorandum of Understanding	MOU
metropolitan planning organization	MPO
Metropolitan Statistical Area	MSA
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers	NCSHPO
Northeast Corridor	NEC
Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission	NEC Commission
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
National Marine Fisheries Service	NOAA NMFS
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA
National Park Service	NPS
New Haven-Hartford-Springfield	NHHS
Notice of Intent	NOI
Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan	PRCIP
Programmatic Agreement	PA
Public Involvement Plan	PIP
Record of Decision	ROD
Service Development Plan	SDP
State Historic Preservation Officer	SHPO
Statement of Principles	SOP
Technical Working Group	TWG
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
U.S. Coast Guard	USCG
U.S. Department of Agriculture	USDA
U.S. Department of the Interior	USDOJ
U.S. Department of Transportation	U.S. DOT
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS

1. Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The goal of the NEC FUTURE Program, led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) as the designated Lead Agency, is to prepare a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP) for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), anchored by Washington Union Station in the south, Pennsylvania Station New York in the center, and Boston South Station in the north. The PRCIP, consisting of a Service Development Plan (SDP) that articulates the overall scope and approach for proposed service, and a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will define an integrated, comprehensive passenger rail transportation solution for the Northeast.

The focus of this effort is the Northeast region of the U.S. and the NEC, an important element of the region's comprehensive, multimodal transportation system. Several connecting corridors, such as the Keystone Corridor to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Empire Corridor to Albany, New York, and the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) corridor in Connecticut and Massachusetts, extend the rail transportation system throughout the Northeast. For the purposes of the Tier 1 EIS evaluation, the Study Area, shown in **Figure 1**, includes the metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) and other counties along the NEC Spine from Boston, MA, to Washington, D.C., and along the Keystone, Empire, and NHHS corridors. The defined program Study Area encompasses the region served by the NEC, plus those areas that can be reached from the NEC directly by train or via a single transfer to connecting corridors (e.g., the Empire Corridor in New York).

The scope of the NEC FUTURE program for the Northeast region includes the economic, financial, and environmental analyses necessary for implementing high-speed intercity passenger rail as a core component of a better integrated, more efficient, safer, and higher-capacity Northeast regional multimodal transportation network that provides redundant and secure travel options. The NEC FUTURE program represents the up-front planning effort that is necessary to determine the most appropriate level and type of investment and provides sufficient information to support an FRA decision to fund and implement major investment in a passenger rail corridor.

For internal management and budgetary purposes, the NEC FUTURE program has been divided into three phases as shown in **Figure 2**. Phase 1 involves the early service planning, environmental data collection, preparation of a Public/Stakeholder Involvement Plan, initiation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process activities including scoping, and early alternatives development and evaluation. Phase 2 will involve further refinement of the alternatives and the preparation of the Tier 1 Draft EIS and the Draft SDP. Phase 3 results in the preparation of the Tier 1 Final EIS and Record of Decision, as well as the Final SDP.

Figure 1: Study Area

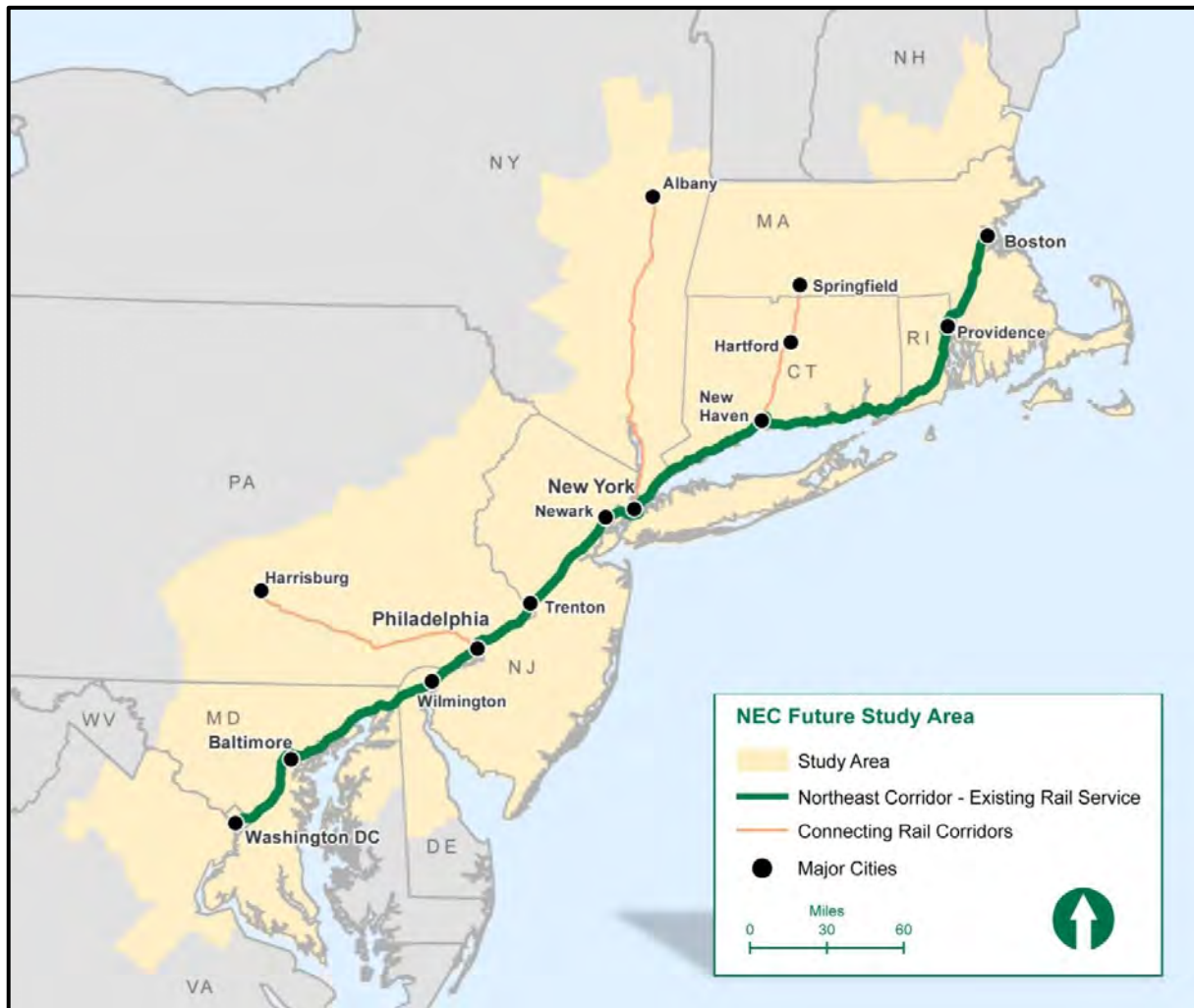
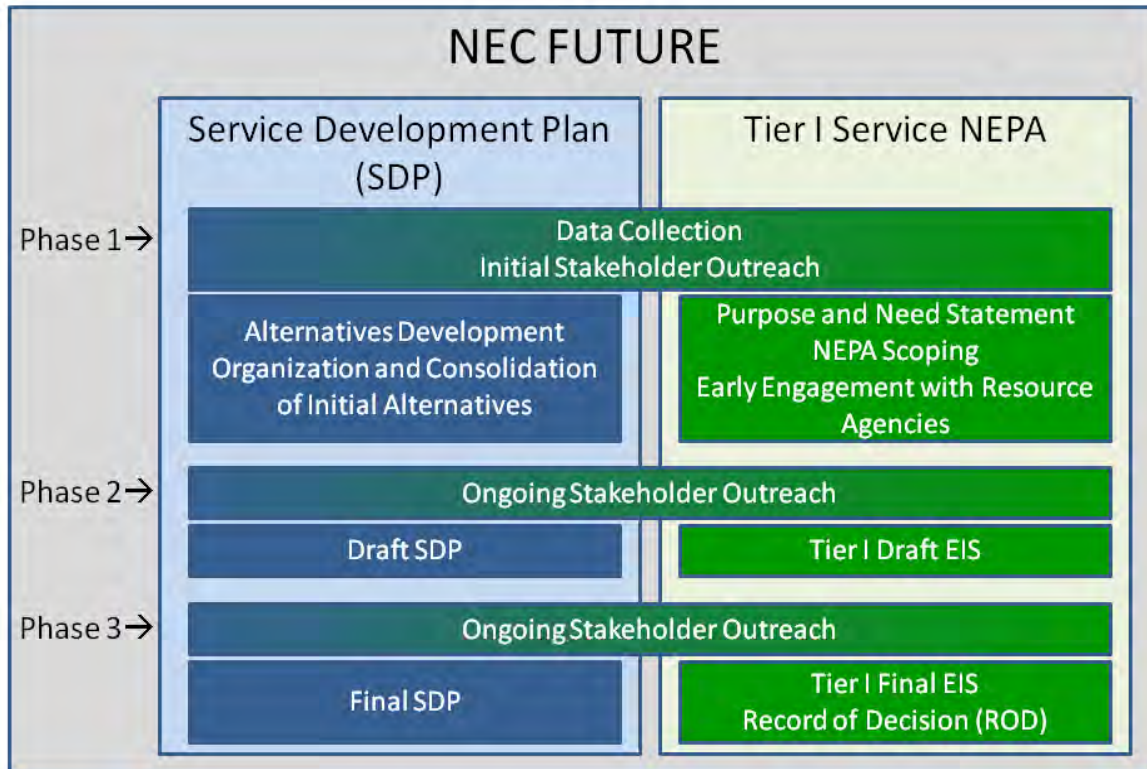


Figure 2: Phases of NEC FUTURE Program


1.2 PURPOSE OF THE AGENCY COORDINATION PLAN

The purpose of this Agency Coordination Plan is to describe planned agency engagement activities at key milestones throughout the development of the Tier 1 EIS. This Plan:

- ▶ Identifies the Lead and Cooperating Agencies for the purposes of NEPA.
- ▶ Identifies regulations with specific consultation requirements.
- ▶ Identifies and describes why other agencies are involved, as well as presents how and when coordination with these involved agencies will occur.

This Agency Coordination Plan will be updated to reflect any changes, as necessary, and to identify additional agency coordination activities leading into later phases of the program. The agency coordination process for the Tier 1 EIS, described in this plan, supplements the overall public involvement program and will occur in parallel with that effort. Further details regarding the public involvement program are outlined and described in the *NEC FUTURE Public Involvement Plan (September 2012)* (PIP).

2. Lead and Cooperating Federal Agencies

Sections 1501.5 – 1501.6 of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing NEPA define federal agency roles and responsibilities in the NEPA process. The **Lead** federal agency is the designated federal agency that is responsible for the undertaking and ensuring compliance with NEPA. For the NEC FUTURE program, FRA is the designated lead federal agency. The CEQ regulations also identify **Cooperating** agencies. Section 1508.5 identifies cooperating agencies as those federal agencies, other than the lead agency, which have jurisdiction by law or a special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal (or a reasonable alternative) for legislation or other major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. A state or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on a reservation, an Indian tribe, may by agreement with the lead agency become a cooperating agency. FRA, as the lead federal agency for the NEC FUTURE program, may request another federal, state, or local agency or Indian tribe to be designated as a cooperating agency.

In light of their special expertise in passenger rail alternatives and environmental reviews and in consideration of the many commuter railroads that might seek funding to implement projects subsequent to the NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS Record of Decision, the FRA invited the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to be a cooperating agency. The FTA has agreed to be a cooperating agency and will continue to coordinate with FRA to finalize this relationship and define the overall process for FTA involvement.

3. Regulations with Specific Consultation Requirements

Several federal regulations require specific types of consultation when a proposed action could affect a protected resource under an agency's jurisdiction. The types of regulations and the agencies with jurisdiction over the regulation are identified below. It is understood that at the Tier 1 EIS level, the early engagement FRA has undertaken with some of these agencies does not replace the specific consultations required by these regulations.

Regulations that have applicability to the NEC FUTURE program and that may require more specific consultation during Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 include:

- ▶ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. §470 et seq.), including Government to Government consultation with Indian Tribes, promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of historic resources administered through a review process that ensures historic properties and cultural resources are considered during the development of any federal project. The lead federal agency for administering Section 106 is the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). FRA has chosen to conduct a concurrent NEPA/Section 106 process as part of the Tier 1 process; therefore, more specific consultations with the ACHP and State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) are occurring as documented in Section 5.1.2 of this document.

- ▶ Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.) provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals, and the habitats in which they are found. The lead federal agencies for implementing ESA are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).
- ▶ The Clean Water Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The lead federal agency responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). However, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has authority over permitting requirements for Waters of the United States, including wetlands.
- ▶ The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §401, 403, 407 et seq.) prohibits the construction of any bridge, dam, dike or causeway over or in navigable waterways or to cause any diversion or obstruction to the navigable capacity of any water in the United States, including any pier, boom, breakwater, or jetty without the permission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG).
- ▶ Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. §303) was enacted as a means of protecting publicly-owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife/waterfowl refuges as well as historic sites of local, state or national significance, from conversion to transportation uses unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use. Section 4(f) applies to all U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) agencies including the FRA.
- ▶ Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C §4701-4) requires that the conversion of lands or facilities acquired with Land and Water Conservation Act funds be coordinated with the National Park Service (NPS) in the U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI). Usually replacement in kind is required.
- ▶ The Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (7 U.S.C. §4202) requires federal agencies to identify the quantity of farmland converted by federal programs to nonagricultural uses; identify the adverse effects of federal programs on the preservation of farmland; consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could lessen such adverse effects; and assure that such federal programs, to the extent practicable, are compatible with State, unit of local government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the agency primarily responsible for the implementation of the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

4. Agency Involvement and Coordination During Phase 1

4.1 INVOLVED AGENCIES

To date, the FRA has engaged numerous agencies and operators within the Study Area. This engagement has occurred as part of a CEQ Pilot Program, NEPA agency scoping, Section 106

compliance, and select briefings. Additionally, federally recognized Indian tribes (Indian tribes) have been engaged via the latter outreach efforts as well as through government-to-government communications. The knowledge, data, and input provided by these agencies and organizations through these activities have been valuable to the NEC FUTURE planning process. The FRA will continue coordination with these types of agencies at various key program milestones to promote transparency and facilitate an informed, efficient, and compliant planning and environmental review process.

The FRA has developed a number of plans and strategy documents to lay the framework for and/or specify coordination with specific agency types. Table 1 identifies these documents and specific outreach efforts relevant to the agency coordination process, along with the agency types to which they apply. These other plans and strategy documents are intended to supplement this Agency Coordination Plan. For example, since the NEC FUTURE program is undertaking a concurrent Tier 1 EIS and Section 106 process, the FRA has developed a *Section 106 Strategy* and *Section 106 Strategy: Approach to Conduct Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes*. This Agency Coordination Plan summarizes Section 106 consultation and coordination activities anticipated at key milestones. In addition, the FRA has developed a *Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Strategy* to lay out future engagement efforts with these government agencies.

All agency types addressed by this Agency Coordination Plan, and whose input is essential to inform and/or comply with the NEPA process, are described as follows:

- ▶ **Federal and State Resource and Regulatory Agencies:** Resource and regulatory agencies include those agencies with permitting authority over resources within the NEC FUTURE Study Area. Although no permitting will take place at a Tier 1 NEPA level, early and frequent engagement with federal and state resource and regulatory agencies is critical to gain input during the NEPA planning process and also to build consensus and identify key issues early in the interest of expedited project-level reviews during Tier 2 environmental analyses.
- ▶ **Federal and State Departments of Transportation:** Departments of Transportation include administrations within the U.S. DOT and those state agencies that plan for and provide transportation infrastructure and/or services within the NEC FUTURE Study Area. Coordination with federal and state departments of transportation, including with the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), comprised of voting members from each of the NEC state departments of transportation, Amtrak, and the U.S. DOT, is necessary to keep them informed about FRA transportation planning efforts.
- ▶ **State Historic Preservation Officers and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers:** Among many functions, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) administer State Historic Preservation Programs to survey historic and archaeological properties, identify and nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places, prepare and implement a statewide historic preservation plan, and cooperate with other government agencies and individuals to ensure that historic properties are taken into consideration at all levels of planning and development. Early and frequent engagement with SHPOs within the NEC FUTURE Study Area is critical to gain input during the Tier 1 NEPA planning process and also to build consensus and identify key issues early in the interests of efficient project-level reviews during

Tier 2 environmental analyses. In addition, coordination with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) is critical as it acts as the communications vehicle among the SHPOs and their staffs and represents the SHPOs with federal agencies and national preservation organizations. Engagement of SHPOs is also described in more detail in the *Section 106 Strategy* document.

- ▶ **Federally Recognized Indian Tribes:** Federally recognized Indian tribes (Indian tribes) are defined in the *Section 106 Strategy* and *Section 106 Strategy: Approach to Conduct Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes* documents; official FRA consultation with Indian tribes is described in detail in these documents. General engagement of Indian tribes is described in this Agency Coordination Plan.
- ▶ **Consulting Parties:** The term “consulting parties” (CP) is used specifically in reference to the Section 106 compliance process. CPs may include SHPOs, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations, representatives of local governments, applicants for Federal assistance, permits, licenses and other approvals, and additional consulting parties, as identified in the *Section 106 Strategy* document.
- ▶ **Other State Agencies:** This group includes other select state agencies within the NEC FUTURE Study Area, such as planning and economic development agencies, as well as bi-state or multi-state agencies.
- ▶ **Metropolitan Planning Organizations:** MPOs within the NEC FUTURE Study Area play a prominent role in transportation planning throughout their respective regions and serve as representatives of their member municipalities and counties. More detailed outreach to MPOs is specified in a separate *MPO Outreach Strategy* document.
- ▶ **Local Agencies:** This group includes select county and local agencies within the NEC FUTURE Study Area.
- ▶ **Railroad and Transit Operators:** This group includes railroad and transit operators (including freight railroads) that operate along the existing NEC and its connecting corridors.
- ▶ **Other Transportation Entities:** This group includes other select transportation agencies that don’t fall within the State Department of Transportation group or Railroad and Transit Operators group, such as airports, airlines, ports, intercity bus operators, private transit operators, highway agencies, and toll authorities.

The agency types provided in bullet points above have been engaged in the NEC FUTURE program through the CEQ Pilot and/or NEPA Scoping processes, described further in **Section 4.2**.

Groups or organizations not defined in this Agency Coordination Plan are defined and addressed in the PIP. Such groups or organizations include non-governmental stakeholders, the general public, rail passengers and other intercity travelers, and environmental justice populations.

TABLE 1: AGENCY COORDINATION PLANS AND OUTREACH

		Federal Government		State Government				Regional/Local Government		Tribe	Transportation Agencies	
		Federal Resource and Regulatory Agencies	Federal Department of Transportation/U.S. DOT	State Resource and Regulatory Agencies	State Departments of Transportation & NEC Commission	SHPOs & NCSHPO	Other State Agencies	Metropolitan Planning Organization	Local Government Agencies	Indian Tribes/Tribal Historic Preservation Officers	Rail/Transit Operators and Freight Railroads	Other Transportation Entities
PLANS	Agency Coordination Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Section 106 Strategy (February 14, 2013)					✓				✓		
	Section 106 Strategy: Approach to Conduct Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes (February 14, 2013)									✓		
	MPO Outreach Strategy (December 10, 2012)							✓				
OUTREACH	Intra- U.S. DOT Coordination		✓									
	Agency-specific Briefings (covered in the PIP)				✓			✓	✓ ¹		✓	
	Combined Briefings ²						✓		✓			✓
	Section 106 Strategy Coordination ³	✓				✓						
	Consultation					✓				✓		
	NEPA Agency Scoping and NEPA Public Hearings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	CEQ Pilot Program and Follow Up Effort ⁴	✓		✓	✓	✓						

1. Includes select local agencies.

2. Combined briefings for groups of agencies whose activities are not otherwise specified in Public Involvement or Agency Coordination activities will be held at key NEC FUTURE program milestones and to report progress, as needed. Webinar(s) and meetings held at the regional level will be offered, as further described in Section 5.1.1.

3. Includes specific coordination with the ACHP and NCSHPO.

4. Includes activities through the Environmental Technical Working Group (TWG) described in Section 5.1.1.

4.2 COORDINATION WITH INVOLVED AGENCIES

4.2.1 NEPA Scoping

According to FRA’s Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 F.R. § 28545) (FRA Environmental Procedures) and the underlying CEQ regulations (Part 1501 – NEPA and Agency Planning, 43 FR 55992, Nov. 29, 1978), the FRA is required to carry out an “early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action” (CEQ, Part Sec. 1501.7) in its proposed environmental review, and to begin that process as soon as practicable after the agency’s decision to prepare an EIS. In accordance with these regulations, the FRA carried out a number of agency coordination activities described below and further documented in a *Scoping Summary* available on the NEC FUTURE website, www.necfuture.com:

- ▶ **Notice of Intent:** On June 22, 2012, the FRA initiated the scoping process with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*.
- ▶ **Scoping Package:** In June 2012, the FRA made a Scoping Package publicly-available to share information about the NEC FUTURE program, including Purpose and Need, Study Area, goals and objectives, planning context, and the public involvement process.
- ▶ **Public Scoping Meetings:** Public scoping meetings were held in August 2012 in each of the eight states along the existing NEC, and Washington D.C. The public meetings consisted of an open house followed by a presentation by the FRA and public testimony. All verbal testimony provided at the public scoping meetings was recorded by stenographers.
- ▶ **Agency Scoping Meetings and Webinar:** In addition to their participation in the public scoping meetings, agencies had the opportunity to attend agency scoping meetings from August 13 through 22, 2012, in each of the NEC’s eight states and the District of Columbia. The purpose of these meetings was to provide a separate but concurrent opportunity to informally discuss the NEC FUTURE program and process with the FRA and to provide information so that agencies could better prepare formal scoping comments. In addition, an agency scoping webinar was held on September 24, 2012, for those unable to attend a meeting in person. All agency types included in this Agency Coordination Plan were invited to participate in Agency scoping activities.
- ▶ **Notice of Intent to Extend the Formal Comment Period for Scoping:** On September 7, 2012, the comment period for scoping was extended from Friday, September 14, 2012, to Friday, October 19, 2012. Interested parties were encouraged to comment on-line at the NEC FUTURE website, via email, or by mail.
- ▶ **Scoping Summary:** As a result of the preceding activities, interested parties, including agencies, provided approximately 2,500 distinct comments regarding the program. The FRA and the NEC FUTURE team developed a Scoping Summary to summarize the comments received and how the comments will be addressed. The NEC FUTURE team also refined project elements to reflect information obtained during the scoping process.

4.2.2 CEQ Pilot Program

CEQ Pilot Program Overview

On January 13, 2012, the CEQ and the U.S. DOT/FRA announced the selection of a NEPA pilot project to implement an innovative, efficient NEPA review process for the NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS. The FRA proposed an approach based on early engagement with federal and state resource and regulatory agencies, including land management agencies. CEQ and FRA committed to engaging environmental resource and regulatory agencies and the public in the environmental review and assessment process early to set benchmarks that maintain rigorous environmental protections and save time and costs by avoiding conflicts and delays often found in complex multi-state transportation projects. The one-year CEQ Pilot Program officially ended in January 2013. The FRA and CEQ have jointly developed a memorandum which documents and describes the best practices that have emerged from the CEQ Pilot Program.

As part of the CEQ Pilot Program, and well in advance of FRA's June 2012 filing of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS, CEQ and FRA established formal points of contact for each of the federal and state resource and regulatory agencies at the headquarters level and, if appropriate, subsequently at the field office level, to participate in the CEQ Pilot Program. State transportation agencies as well as SHPOs were also identified to participate to foster communication and integrate the transportation planning and environmental review process. A list of agencies involved in the CEQ Pilot Program, by agency type, is provided in Table 2.

Thirteen regional resource meetings and/or webinars with designated points of contact (and additional staff as appropriate) took place throughout the NEC as part of this CEQ Pilot Program. At these meetings, the FRA provided the participants with a program overview that included details of the NEC FUTURE planning and environmental processes as well as the schedule for completion of the NEPA Tier 1 EIS; engaged in a discussion on the program's goals and preliminary Purpose & Need components; conducted roundtable discussions regarding the program Study Area and how best to coordinate with the agencies; shared the feedback from the scoping process and provided data collection results; and obtained input on how to document the coordination between the agencies. The FRA plans to continue to inform agencies about the program's status, involve agencies in the alternatives development process, and engage agencies in topic-specific impact assessment discussions.

This approach of engaging resource and regulatory agencies early in the planning process and involving them as collaborative partners not only in the implementation of several aspects of the NEPA process, but also in the structuring of the agency-coordination effort is an innovative approach for FRA. The effort resulted in more effective coordination with the resource and regulatory agencies. For example, as FRA conducted agency scoping meetings in August 2012, the state and federal resource and regulatory agencies were already familiar with the project and could provide more substantive comments with regard to the Tier 1 EIS and alternatives development process.

TABLE 2: AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE CEQ PILOT PROGRAM

Agency
Federal Resource and Regulatory Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ▶ Department of the Interior - Office of Environmental Policy & Compliance ▶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – National Marine Fisheries Service ▶ National Park Service ▶ United States Army Corps of Engineers ▶ United States Coast Guard ▶ United States Environmental Protection Agency ▶ United States Fish and Wildlife Service
State Resource and Regulatory Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection ▶ Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control ▶ District Department of the Environment ▶ Maryland Department of the Environment ▶ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ▶ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ▶ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection ▶ Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
State Departments of Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connecticut Department of Transportation ▶ District Department of Transportation ▶ Delaware Department of Transportation ▶ Massachusetts Department of Transportation ▶ Maryland Department of Transportation ▶ NJ Department of Transportation /NJ TRANSIT ▶ New York State Department of Transportation ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation ▶ Rhode Island Department of Transportation
State Historic Preservation Officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development - Historic Preservation and Museum Division ▶ Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs ▶ District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office ▶ Maryland Historic Trust ▶ Massachusetts Historical Commission ▶ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection - Historic Preservation ▶ New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Division for Historic Preservation ▶ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission - Bureau for Historic Preservation ▶ Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Development of the Statement of Principles

As an effort to solidify early engagement coordination, provide greater transparency, and expedite the development of a framework that would reinforce the parties' collaborative efforts, CEQ and FRA worked with the federal and state resource and regulatory agencies to develop an alternative approach to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process that sometimes accompanies a NEPA process. Therefore, a Statement of Principles was developed by FRA, CEQ, and the resource and regulatory agencies as part of this CEQ Pilot Program. The Statement of Principles, included in **Appendix A**, was finalized in February 2013. Agreement with the Statement of Principles is reflected by each federal resource and regulatory agency granting permission to FRA to place their agency seal on the Statement.

4.2.3 Section 106 Process and Government-to-Government Consultation

Section 106 and Government-to-Government consultation was initiated with the SHPOs (listed in Table 2) and Indian tribes (listed in Table 3), respectively, in early June 2012 so as to engage these parties as part of the early coordination process prior to scoping for the Tier 1 EIS.

TABLE 3: FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES

Indian Tribes
▶ Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
▶ Cayuga Nation of New York
▶ Delaware Nation
▶ Delaware Tribe
▶ Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
▶ Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation
▶ Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
▶ Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island
▶ Oneida Nation of New York
▶ Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
▶ Onondaga Nation of New York
▶ Seneca Nation of New York
▶ Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
▶ Shawnee Tribe
▶ Shinnecock Indian Nation
▶ Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
▶ Stockbridge Munsee Community, Wisconsin
▶ Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut
▶ Towanda Band of Seneca Indians of New York
▶ Tuscarora Nation of New York
▶ Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) of Massachusetts

5. Agency Coordination Activities During Phases 2 and 3

Agencies that have been involved in the NEC FUTURE program to date (as described in Section 4) will continue to have opportunities for meaningful participation in the Tier 1 EIS effort through activities that align with key decision points. Many of these opportunities are delineated in other plans and strategy documents that supplement this Agency Coordination Plan. Additional opportunities anticipated through October 2013 for agencies involved in the agency coordination process are identified in Table 4 and discussed further below. This table is intended to provide the coordination schedule noted in the SOP. This plan and Table 4 will be updated as necessary to identify additional activities leading into later phases of the program.

Agency coordination activities and issues raised by agencies will be documented and shared, as appropriate, with the NEC FUTURE program team so that they can be integrated into both the planning and environmental elements of the program.

5.1.1 NEPA Process

Federal and State Resource and Regulatory Agencies

Coordination with agencies through the beginning of Phase 2 will be valuable to provide input into alternatives refinement and preparation of the Tier 1 Draft EIS and the Draft SDP. With regard to alternatives development, agencies will be kept apprised as to the availability of Preliminary Alternatives. The FRA will also seek input regarding screening criteria to be used in the refinement of Preliminary Alternatives to Reasonable Alternatives. Once the Reasonable Alternatives are established, these will also be shared with the agencies.

It is anticipated that through this agency coordination, specific Resource Working Groups may be established to inform various aspects of the development of the Tier 1 EIS. Additionally, since Phase 2 of the NEC FUTURE program also begins with the development of the Tier 1 Draft EIS, the FRA has created an Environmental Technical Working Group (TWG) that will convene to discuss specific resource areas being covered in the Tier 1 environmental analysis. The membership and activities of the Agency Resource Working Groups will be coordinated with the Environmental TWG process. As such, agencies may be requested to participate in select Environmental TWG meeting(s) to help develop resource-specific impact assessment methodologies and to discuss the appropriate Tier 1 NEPA outputs versus what would more appropriately be addressed in future Tier 2 analyses. More detail on meeting topics and potential participants are included in the *Environmental TWG Action Plan (March 2013)*.

Coordination with federal resource and regulatory agencies, including communication and scheduling protocols, will follow the Statement of Principles (SOP) established through the CEQ Pilot Program for the NEC FUTURE program, described in **Section 4.2.2**. The SOP is provided in **Appendix A**. This early engagement initiated with the CEQ Pilot will facilitate agency coordination for federal resource agencies involved in the development of the SOP.

This interagency coordination will also continue the early engagement with the U.S. DOT modal agencies (e.g., FHWA, FAA, FTA, etc.).

Other Agency Types

Combined briefings for certain agency types whose activities are not otherwise specified in Public Involvement or Agency Coordination activities, including other state agencies, local government agencies, and other transportation entities, will be held at key NEC FUTURE program milestones and to report progress, as needed. Meetings will be held at the regional level as follows, and webinar(s) will be offered to reach a broader group of people.

- ▶ South Region: Washington, D.C., Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania
- ▶ Central Region: New Jersey and New York
- ▶ North Region: Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts

Agencies will be extended an invitation to attend these briefings via email through contacts established through the formal NEPA process. This list will be monitored and updated periodically to ensure coordination with the most appropriate agencies and points-of-contact.

5.1.2 Section 106 Process and Government-to-Government Consultation

Section 106 and Government-to-Government consultation was initiated with the SHPOs and Indian tribes, respectively, in early June 2012, so as to engage these parties as part of the early coordination process prior to scoping for the Tier 1 EIS. The FRA is undertaking a concurrent Section 106 process that will: 1) focus on gaining an understanding of known and potential historic resources that exist within the Study Area; 2) influence how the proposed program alternatives might avoid those resources; and 3) establish a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to guide future phases of the Section 106 process. This process involves the FRA as the federal agency official, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a number of identified Consulting Parties (CP), and the public.

It is expected that once the CPs have been identified and agreed upon, additional consultation may be required. FRA will work with identified CPs to identify the best way to communicate either on an individual basis or some type of group setting (via teleconference or webinars). Additionally, FRA will continue to invite CPs to participate in the broader regional engagement initiated through the CEQ Pilot Program. FRA has developed strategies for complying with Section 106. Those strategies are provided in separate documents entitled *Section 106 Strategy* and *Section 106 Strategy: Approach to Conduct Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes*.

TABLE 4: AGENCY COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

Topic	Purpose	Agencies	Meeting Type	Timing
NEPA Process				
Preliminary Alternatives & Environmental Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce agencies to Preliminary Alternatives Define Screening criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agencies State resource and regulatory agencies 	Corridor-wide webinar	Late March 2013
Resource-specific Methodology Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and discuss specific resource methodologies Coordinate headquarters and regional perspectives within an individual agency Develop framework/ understanding of Tier 1 outputs and Tier 2 additional analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agencies State resource and regulatory agencies 	In-person/webinars, as coordinated through the Environmental TWG effort	May-June 2013
Reasonable Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce reasonable alternatives to be included in Tier 1 EIS document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agencies State resource and regulatory agencies State departments of transportation (including the NEC Commission) SHPOs & NCSHPO 	In-person	September 2013
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other state agencies Local agencies Other transportation entities 	In-person/webinar combined briefing	October 2013
Development of the Tier 1 Draft EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss preliminary findings of the Tier 1 Draft EIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agencies State resource and regulatory agencies State departments of transportation (including the NEC Commission) 	In-person/webinar combined briefing	TBD*
Tier 1 Draft EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All agency types identified in Table 1 	Formal Hearings	TBD*

TABLE 4: AGENCY COORDINATION ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Topic	Purpose	Agencies	Meeting Type	Timing
NEPA Process (continued)				
Public/Agency Comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review input received during formal public hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All agency types identified in Table 1 	In-person/webinar combined briefing	TBD*
Selected Alternative & Tier 1 Final EIS Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present FRA's Selected Alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agencies State resource and regulatory agencies State departments of transportation (including the NEC Commission) 	In-person/webinar combined briefing	TBD*
Section 106 Process and Government-to-Government Consultation				
ACHP/NCSHPO Initial Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Overview Section 106 Approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agency (ACHP) NCSHPO 	Webinars	March 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from SHPO March Webinars 		In-person	Late March 2013
SHPO Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide program overview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHPOs 	Webinars	March 2013
Individual SHPO Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up from group consultation with one-on-one discussions to identify available data/initiate data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHPOs 	In-person/webinars	March/April 2013
Development of PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss Preliminary draft of elements of PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal resource and regulatory agency (ACHP) SHPOs & NCSHPO Tribal Historic Preservation Officers 	In-person/webinars	July 2013
Government-to-Government Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal consultation to provide program overview and listen to concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian tribes 	In-person/webinars	April-July 2013

*TBD: To Be Determined

Scoping Summary and Scoping Summary Appendix

NEC FUTURE

A Rail Investment Plan
for the Northeast Corridor



SCOPING SUMMARY



December 2012



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. INTRODUCTION.....	3
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SDP AND TIER 1 EIS	3
PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT.....	4
NEPA AND THE SCOPING PROCESS.....	4
ONGOING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	6
III. PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS AND COMMENTS	7
PUBLIC MEETINGS.....	7
PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT OVERVIEW	10
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY CATEGORY.....	13
<i>Study Area</i>	13
<i>Purpose & Need</i>	16
<i>Alternatives</i>	23
<i>NEPA Process</i>	35
<i>Affected Environment</i>	38
<i>Cost and Funding</i>	42
<i>Public and Agency Involvement</i>	44
<i>Outside of Scope</i>	48
ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS	49
IV. AGENCY SCOPING PROCESS AND COMMENTS	52
AGENCY MEETINGS	52
<i>Agency Meeting Highlights</i>	53
FORMAL COMMENTS BY AGENCY / ORGANIZATION	55
<i>Federal Agencies</i>	55
<i>State Agencies</i>	58
<i>Regional Planning Organizations</i>	68
<i>Counties and Local Governments</i>	73
<i>Passenger Rail Providers</i>	74
V. NEXT STEPS	76

APPENDIX

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
NOTICE OF INTENT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXTEND THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD	
PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION	
AGENCY SCOPING PRESENTATION	
PUBLIC SCOPING DISPLAY BOARDS	
PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT CARD AND HANDOUT	
AGENCY SCOPING INVITATIONS	

Tables

TABLE 1: PUBLIC MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS	7
TABLE 2: LEGAL NOTICES	8
TABLE 4: STUDY AREA COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	15
TABLE 5: PURPOSE & NEED COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	17
TABLE 6: ALTERNATIVES COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	23
TABLE 7: NEPA PROCESS COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	35
TABLE 8: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	38
TABLE 9: COST AND FUNDING COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	42
TABLE 10: PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	44
TABLE 11: OUTSIDE OF SCOPE COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	48
TABLE 12: AGENCY MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS.....	52

Figures

FIGURE 1: SCOPING TIMELINE	5
FIGURE 2: COMMENTS BY CATEGORY	11
FIGURE 3: COMMENTERS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP	12
FIGURE 4: COMMENTS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP	12
FIGURE 5: PRELIMINARY STUDY AREA.....	14

I. Executive Summary

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is developing a rail investment program for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), the rail spine which runs from Washington, D.C. through New York to Boston. Known as NEC FUTURE, this initiative includes a broad environmental analysis, known as a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and a Service Development Plan (SDP) that will outline how future passenger rail service is to be provided on the NEC. These studies will be completed in 2015 and will guide future investments in the corridor through 2040.

A key first element of NEC FUTURE was a scoping process that enabled agencies, stakeholders and the public to learn about and contribute to shaping the NEC FUTURE program. The scoping process was carried out in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) over a four-month period from June 22 through October 19, 2012. During this period, the FRA invited the public to comment on the Purpose & Need for the rail investment program, the Study Area, the range of alternatives to be considered, and the types of environmental consequences to be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. A Scoping Package that provided background information on each of these topics was posted on the project website.

In August 2012, the FRA held agency and public scoping meetings in each of the NEC's eight states and the District of Columbia. The agency meetings included a presentation and informal discussion and were attended by over 100 federal, state, regional, and local agencies, rail and transit operators, and tribal governments. Over 500 people attended the public meetings, which included a presentation, open house, and opportunities for formal public and private testimony. Comments were received at the public scoping meetings as well as via mail, email, and the project website.

Approximately 800 individuals, representatives from agencies and other organizations provided comments, with many commenters addressing multiple topics. This resulted in nearly 2,500 distinct comments for review and analysis by the FRA. The ideas, comments, and concerns expressed during this process have all been considered and are a key element in moving the NEC FUTURE program forward and in the development of the Tier 1 EIS and SDP.

The scoping comments addressed a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, the NEC FUTURE Study Area, Purpose & Need, alternatives, funding, and the public involvement process. Both corridor-wide and locale-specific comments were received.

The following are highlights of the corridor-wide comments:

- A central theme was the desirability of an incremental approach that would repair and strengthen the existing NEC before adding new services. This could include bringing the entire NEC into a state of good repair, improving operations and connections, and a phased approach to increase capacity, reduce travel times, and extend coverage.
- Connectivity and coordination were also key themes: comments addressed the need to improve connections between regional and local service through improved scheduling, increased capacity and through-ticketing, as well as improving connections with airports and local transit.
- Another theme was balancing service to existing NEC cities with service to new markets.

- Some commenters recommended a focus on near-term, low-cost investments, while others called on FRA to “think big” and consider improvements beyond the next 30–40 years.
- Support was expressed for new technologies and operating practices.
- Commenters suggested clarifying project goals with additional language on affordability of rail service, climate change, and support for economic development.
- Commenters also stressed the importance of an open and inclusive public process, with regular opportunities for dialogue.

Other concerns were specific to a particular state, metropolitan area or locality:

- Many agencies stressed the importance of coordinating and supporting related plans, programs and policies in their respective areas. Others mentioned the need to be sensitive to changing demographic trends and new visions for future development.
- In each region, participants expressed support for local projects or proposals, such as the North-South Rail Link in Boston, trans-Hudson capacity options in New York and New Jersey, and bridge and tunnel projects in Maryland.
- Comments addressed the potential for serving new stations or maintaining and improving service to existing stations; many stressed the benefits of improved rail service to downtowns and metropolitan areas.
- Participants requested the expansion of the Study Area to include areas such as Maine, Vermont, Montreal, and Virginia.

This report describes the scoping process and summarizes comments received. It identifies the range of concerns raised by agencies and the public, provides representative examples of comments on each general topic, and summarizes how the comments will be addressed.

Moving forward, the scope of the NEC FUTURE program will continue to be updated based on additional public involvement and agency coordination. The input received during this scoping process will shape and inform the development of alternatives, the Tier 1 EIS, agency coordination, and the public involvement process.

II. Introduction

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is developing a rail investment program for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), the rail spine which runs from Washington, D.C. through New York to Boston. Known as NEC FUTURE, this initiative consists of a Service Development Plan (SDP) that will outline how future passenger rail service is to be provided and a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Together, the SDP and Tier 1 EIS will form a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP) that will guide future investments in the corridor through 2040. The PRCIP will define an integrated, comprehensive passenger rail transportation solution for the Northeast. Its purpose is to improve mobility, effectively serve travel demand due to population and job growth, support economic development, reduce growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contribute to improved land utilization and investment in both urban and non-urban communities in the region.

The Northeast region has one of the most extensive multi-modal passenger and freight transportation systems in the world—highways, airports, ports, intercity and regional/commuter rail, and public transit serving all major cities and many intermediate markets. However, despite significant investment in all transportation modes over recent decades, the region still faces major congestion and capacity constraints. These constraints, if not addressed, have the potential to curtail future mobility and economic growth and place the Northeast at a competitive disadvantage to other regions of the United States and the world.

The goal of the NEC FUTURE program is to define a comprehensive and integrated preferred investment program for the NEC that provides the capacity and reliability necessary for the region's passenger rail system to support Northeast transportation needs in the coming decades. With eight states, the District of Columbia, nine commuter authorities, Amtrak, and multiple freight operators using and investing in the NEC, a coordinated and integrated NEC plan is essential. NEC FUTURE provides the vision, framework, and regional platform to coordinate this collaborative effort.

A key first element of NEC FUTURE was a scoping process that enabled agencies, stakeholders and the public to learn about and contribute to the NEC FUTURE program. The scoping process was carried out in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) over a four-month period from June 22 through October 19, 2012. During this period, the FRA invited the public to comment on the Purpose & Need for the rail investment program, the Study Area, the range of alternatives to be considered, and the types of environmental consequences to be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. In August 2012, the FRA held agency and public scoping meetings in each of the NEC's eight states and the District of Columbia. Numerous comments were received at the public scoping meetings as well as via mail, email, and the project website.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SDP AND TIER 1 EIS

A Service Development Plan (SDP) provides a platform to improve existing rail service to meet growing travel demand. A SDP defines possible rail improvements and evaluates the operational, network, and financial impacts of the proposed improvements. For the NEC FUTURE program, the SDP will provide the framework for the selection of a preferred investment program.

Given the scope, complexity and long-term nature of possible alternatives to be considered for the NEC FUTURE program, FRA is implementing a tiered approach to environmental review. This environmental review is consistent with FRA's *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (64 FR 28454) and NEPA. The NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS will take a broad approach to the overall environmental effects of alternatives.

The Tier 1 EIS and SDP are being advanced in parallel, with the consideration of environmental factors informing the rail planning efforts. The Tier 1 EIS will define the overall framework for subsequent site-specific actions, when those actions are ready to be advanced. Those site-specific actions may require subsequent project-level environmental reviews.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report outlines the scoping process and identifies the range of comments that were received during the scoping period. In addition, this report provides responses to representative comments. These comments and the responses will help inform the FRA as it moves forward with the NEC FUTURE program and in the development of the Tier 1 EIS.

The NEC FUTURE program received numerous informative and insightful comments. These comments covered a range of issues and concerns raised about the NEC FUTURE program by agencies, organizations, communities, and individuals. The purpose of this document is not to provide a verbatim transcript of all of those comments, but a meaningful summary of what was heard and how those comments will inform the NEC FUTURE program as it advances.

Comments provided during scoping were reviewed and organized into eight broad categories: Study Area; Purpose & Need; Alternatives; NEPA Process; Affected Environment; Cost and Funding; Public and Agency Involvement; and Outside of Scope. After categorization, comments were reviewed by the FRA and appropriate responses were prepared.

NEPA AND THE SCOPING PROCESS

The intent of scoping is to establish an open forum for communication and to identify the "scope" and significance of issues to be addressed during the preparation of the Tier 1 EIS. As such, the scoping process for the NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS has included the review and categorization of all comments received during scoping.

The FRA recognizes the importance of an open public dialogue to develop a credible rail investment plan. As part of NEPA, scoping is an early and open process that invites agencies and the public to comment on various aspects of a project. Information gathered during the scoping process helps to shape alternatives and identifies issues for consideration in the Tier I EIS.

Scoping launches the ongoing agency and public involvement process that is the cornerstone of the NEC FUTURE program. The scale and diversity of the region, the large number of organizations and jurisdictions potentially interested in the NEC FUTURE program, and the array of issues to be considered demand a broad, multi-faceted outreach program.

Consistent with the requirements of NEPA, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and FRA's *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, efforts were made to reach out to a diverse group of stakeholders during scoping. Groups that were involved and engaged in the

scoping process included members of the public, elected officials, interest groups, government and non-government agencies and businesses. The scoping process consisted of four major elements:

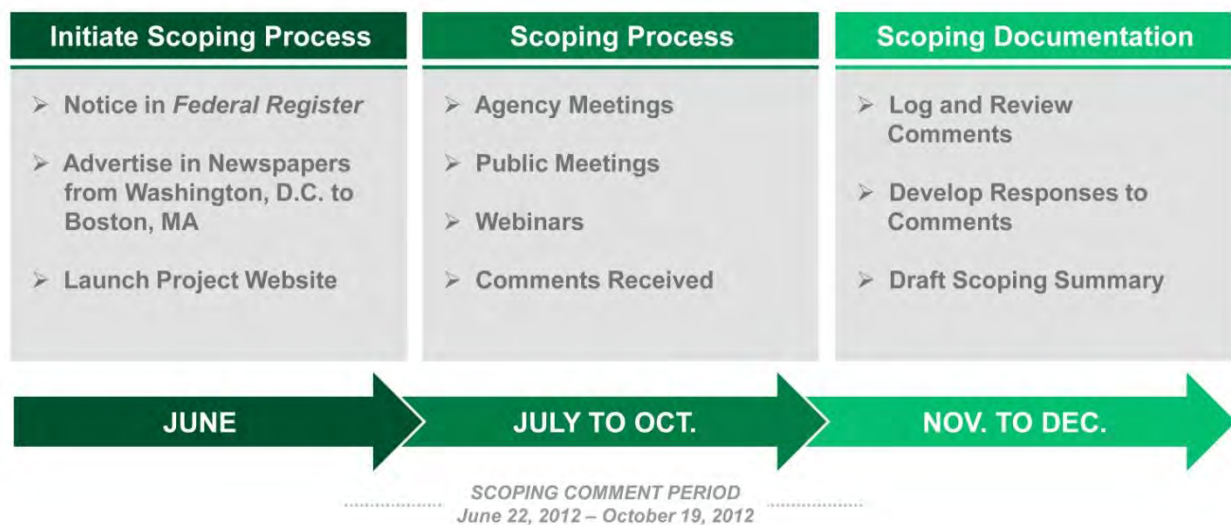
- Notice of Intent (NOI)
- Scoping Package
- Agency and Public Scoping Meetings
- Scoping Comment Period

On June 22, 2012, the scoping process was initiated with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. *Figure 1: Scoping Timeline* identifies the various elements of the scoping process, which culminates with the publication of this Scoping Summary. Scoping was advertised in numerous newspapers and periodicals throughout the Northeast region. Scoping materials were provided for public review through public notices, the project website (www.necfuture.com), written communications with federal, state, regional, and local agencies, rail and transit operators, tribal governments, and briefings with the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission) members, state transportation agencies, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO). The Scoping Package (June 2012) was developed to share information about the NEC FUTURE program. It contains information on a variety of topics including the Purpose & Need, Study Area, goals and objectives, planning context, and the public involvement process.

As originally noticed, the scoping comment period was to close on September 14, 2012. An extension of the scoping comment period to October 19, 2012 was noticed in the *Federal Register* on September 9, 2012 in response to comments received during the scoping process. A copy of the NOI and the subsequent notice issued by FRA to extend the scoping period to October 19, 2012, are included in the **Appendix** to this document.

The FRA invited interested parties to submit comments on the project website, by email, or by mail. In addition, interested parties could provide comments in person at the scheduled scoping meetings either via written comment card or oral testimony.

Figure 1: Scoping Timeline



Scoping meetings were held in August 2012 in each of the eight states along the existing NEC, and Washington D.C. Both a public meeting and agency meeting were held at each location. The public meetings consisted of an open house followed by a presentation by the FRA and public testimony. All verbal testimony provided at the public scoping meetings was recorded by stenographers.

The NEC FUTURE team continued to receive comments until the close of the comment period on October 19, 2012. All input received that is documented in this Scoping Summary will be considered in the development of the Tier I EIS.

ONGOING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Beyond scoping, the FRA will provide ongoing opportunities for public input to inform the Tier 1 EIS and SDP. In December 2012, a series of public workshops, known as the “*December Dialogues*,” were held to review and discuss the study, including the results of the scoping process. These workshops were held in Boston, MA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; and by webinar. The workshops provided opportunities to discuss the NEC FUTURE goals, including potential additions or refinements, as well as to review and prioritize rail passenger service characteristics for consideration in developing and evaluating alternatives.

FRA will provide additional forums for interactive communication during 2013. Information about these opportunities for continued stakeholder and public involvement will be available on the NEC FUTURE website, www.necfuture.com, and through email communications to everyone in the email database.

FRA will schedule a public hearing to request comments from the public upon completion of the Tier 1 Draft EIS in 2014. This comment process will follow formal procedures similar to scoping. There will be a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Tier 1 Draft EIS, which will be published in the *Federal Register*. There will be formal public hearings and agencies and the public will have the opportunity to attend and provide oral or written comments at these hearings. There will also be opportunities to submit written comments within a specified comment period. Comments submitted during the public hearing process will be addressed in the Tier 1 Final EIS.

III. Public Scoping Process and Comments

The FRA utilized a variety of techniques to inform and engage the public during the NEC FUTURE scoping process. This section identifies the methods and means used to provide information about NEC FUTURE to the public and the opportunities afforded the public to become informed and provide comment.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The FRA conducted public scoping meetings for the NEC FUTURE program from August 13 through August 22, 2012, in each of the corridor’s eight states and the District of Columbia. Public meetings were attended by agencies, elected officials, individual members of the public, business groups and other interest groups. The meetings were held from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in multiple cities as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Public Meeting Dates and Locations		
Date	City, State	Building Location
August 13	Boston, MA	Massachusetts State Transportation Building 10 Park Plaza
August 14	New Haven, CT	Shubert Theater 247 College Street
August 15	Baltimore, MD	University of Baltimore, Thumel Conference Facilities 11 W. Mount Royal Street
August 15	Newark, NJ	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Board Room One Newark Center
August 16	New York City, NY	Moynihan Station 380 W. 33 rd Street
August 20	Philadelphia, PA	SEPTA Board Room Complex 1234 Market Street
August 20	Wilmington, DE	Carvel State Office Building 820 N. French Street
August 21	Washington, D.C.	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 777 N. Capitol Street, NE
August 22	Providence, RI	State Administration Building One Capitol Hill

The meetings included an open-house format with project information boards, copies of which are included in the **Appendix**. The meetings were staffed by the NEC FUTURE team. Conversational interactions and informal discussions were encouraged between the public and team members as the members of the public reviewed the information boards. A formal presentation took place at 5:00 p.m. followed by an opportunity for public and private testimony.

The meetings were widely publicized throughout the corridor with legal notices, display advertisements, and numerous newspaper articles. More than thirty newspapers, including regional editions of the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *METRO*, a free newspaper handed out

at transit stops, ran advertisements about the meetings. Several papers ran more than one advertisement, such as *The New York Times*, which ran a legal notice on August 2 and region-specific display advertisements on August 9 and August 12.

Information about the Scoping Package and scoping meetings were also available on the project website, www.necfuture.com.

Legal notices and display advertisements were published in the newspapers listed below in *Tables 2* and *3* from August 1 through August 17, 2012.

Table 2: Legal Notices		
Publication	Published Date	Meeting Publicized
<i>Baltimore Sun</i> (MD)	8/1/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>Connecticut Post</i> (CT)	8/1/2012	New Haven
<i>Hartford Courant</i> (CT)	8/1/2012	New Haven
<i>New Haven Register</i> (CT)	8/1/2012	Boston
<i>Star Ledger</i> (NJ)	8/1/2012	Newark
<i>Boston Globe</i> (MA)	8/2/2012	Boston
<i>The Day</i> (CT)	8/2/2012	New Haven Providence
<i>New York Times</i> (NY)	8/2/2012	New York City
<i>Stamford Times</i> (CT)	8/3/2012	New Haven
<i>Trenton Times</i> (NJ)	8/3/2012	Newark
<i>Springfield Republican</i> (MA)	8/4/2012	Boston New Haven
<i>Delaware News Journal</i> (DE)	8/6/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> (PA)	8/6/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Washington Post</i> (DC)	8/6/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>Providence Journal</i> (RI)	8/7/2012	Providence

Table 3: Display Advertisements

Publication	Published Date	Meeting Publicized
<i>Washington Post</i> (DC)	8/8/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>New York Times</i> (NY)	8/9/2012, 8/12/2012	Newark New York City Philadelphia
<i>Boston Globe</i> (MA)	8/9/2012	Boston New Haven Providence
<i>Metro</i> (MA)	8/9/2012	Boston New Haven Providence
<i>Metro</i> (NY)	8/9/2012	New Haven Newark New York City Philadelphia
<i>Metro</i> (PA)	8/9/2012	Newark New York City Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Philadelphia Tribune</i>	8/9/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Wall Street Journal</i> (NY)	8/9/2012	Newark New York City Philadelphia
<i>Wall Street Journal</i> (New England)	8/9/2012	Boston New Haven Providence
<i>Wall Street Journal</i> (DC)	8/9/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>Wall Street Journal</i> (PA)	8/9/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>El Diario</i> (NY)	8/10/2012	Boston New Haven Newark New York City Philadelphia Providence
<i>El Tiempo Hispano</i> (PA)	8/10/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Baltimore Afro American</i> (MD)	8/11/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>Al Dia</i> (PA)	8/12/2012-8/18/2012	Philadelphia Wilmington
<i>Washington Post Express</i> (DC)	8/14/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.
<i>Washington Afro American</i> (DC)	8/18/2012	Baltimore Washington, D.C.

In total, over 500 people attended the nine public scoping meetings. Ninety-four speakers delivered oral comments and 57 written statements were received. Attendees included representatives of federal, state, regional, and local agencies; elected officials (i.e., state, county, local); businesses and business organizations; non-profit organizations; railroads and transit organizations; railroad users, residents, and members of the media.

PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT OVERVIEW

The FRA received approximately 2,500 distinct comments from approximately 800 commenters during the four-month scoping period. Many of the commenters addressed multiple issues, while others focused on a single issue, leading to the difference in the number of comments versus commenters.

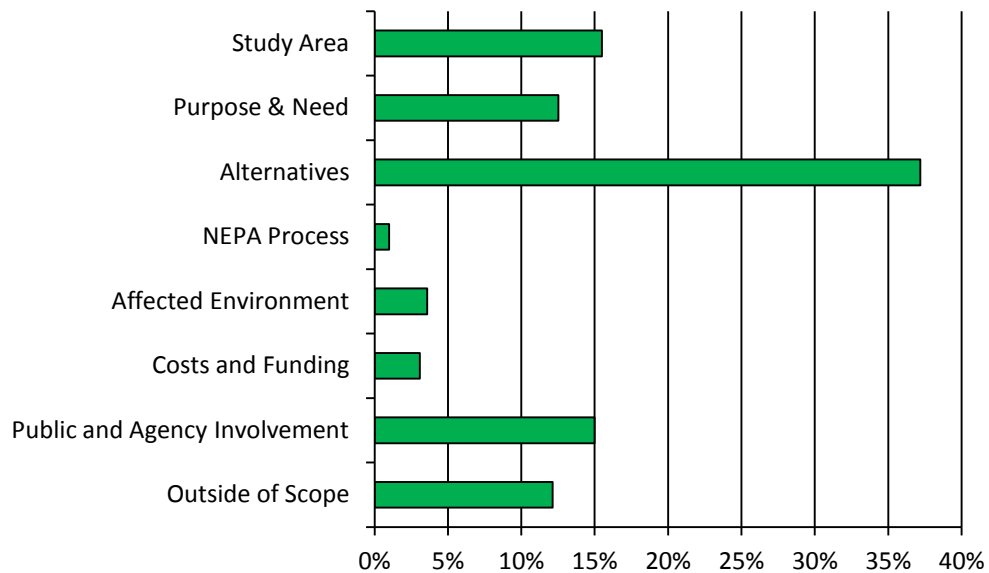
This document is organized first by commenter type. The commenter types are defined below:

- **Public** – This includes the general public, private businesses, non-governmental organizations (including Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG), New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium, Regional Plan Association (RPA)), freight railroads (including Conrail, Providence & Worcester, Norfolk Southern, CSX Transportation), and various interest and advocacy groups (including the Empire State Passengers Association, Lackawanna Coalition, National Association of Railroad Passengers, New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers, North-South Rail Link Citizen Advisory Committee, Rail Users' Network, Sierra Club).
- **Elected Officials** – This includes publicly elected federal, state, and local officials.
- **Agencies** – This includes all federal, state, regional, and local agencies and passenger rail and transit operators/providers.

The comments are then organized by comment categories. The eight general comment categories include: Study Area, Purpose & Need, Alternatives, NEPA Process, Affected Environment, Costs and Funding, Public and Agency Involvement, and Outside of Scope.

More than one-third of all comments received were about Alternatives. Study Area, Purpose & Need, and Public and Agency Involvement categories each represented at least 10% of the total. The overall distribution of comments received by comment category is shown in *Figure 2, Comments by Category*. *Figure 2* includes all distinct comments received during the scoping period.

Figure 2: Comments by Category



To better understand the participation and distribution of comments, the scoping commenters and their comments were further grouped by type: Non-Governmental Organization, Individuals and Private Business, Agency, and Elected Official. The following two pie charts, *Figures 3 and 4*, show the percentage of scoping commenters and their distinct comments by stakeholder group, respectively.

Individuals or private businesses represented approximately 76% of the nearly 800 commenters. Individuals and private businesses also provided the majority of all comments, with 63% of all comments being made by an individual or representative of a private business. Non-governmental organizations were the next largest group of commenters, making up 15% of all commenters, and providing 21% of all comments.

All comments received throughout the NEPA process will be read and considered, but only those comments received during the official comment period are considered in this Scoping Summary.

Figure 3: Commenters by Stakeholder Group

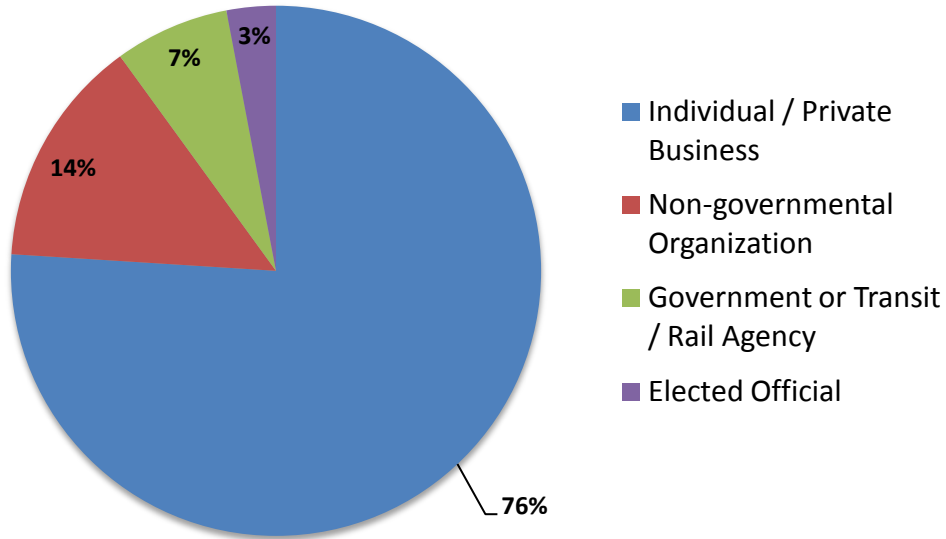
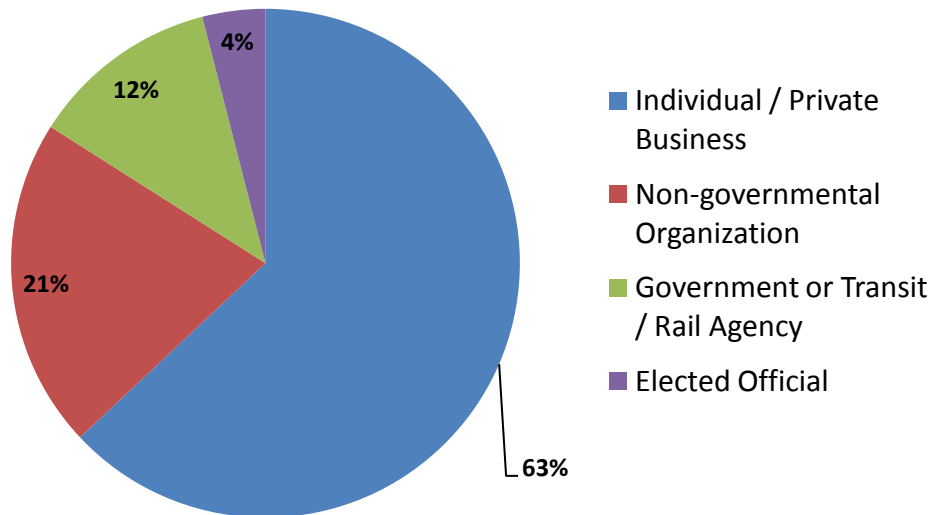


Figure 4: Comments by Stakeholder Group



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY CATEGORY

The following sections highlight the overarching themes for each of the previously identified comment categories as expressed in comments received from the public. For each comment category, individual comments were reviewed to identify themes or concerns articulated by more than one commenter. For each theme within a comment category, a response is provided. To help illustrate the individual perspectives within each theme, quotes have been extracted from individual comments. These quotes are provided without attribution to keep the focus on the comments themselves and not the individual or organization making the comment. All comments received during scoping have been considered and are represented in this Scoping Summary.

The summary in this section represents only those comments received from the public, non-governmental agencies, elected officials and advocacy or special interest groups. Comments from federal, state, regional or local agencies, rail and transit operators, and tribal governments are separately summarized, by agency, in Section IV of this Scoping Summary.

Study Area

Approximately 350 comments, about 15% of all comments, addressed the NEC FUTURE Study Area. The NEC FUTURE Study Area includes those metropolitan areas containing the NEC rail spine, which runs between Washington, D.C., New York City and Boston, MA. In addition, portions of Virginia and New Hampshire that are within the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA respectively are also included.

Themes within the Study Area category include Virginia coverage, New York-Pennsylvania coverage, and New England coverage.

Figure 5 depicts the NEC FUTURE program Study Area.

Table 4 summarizes comments and responses on the Study Area. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Figure 5: Preliminary Study Area



Table 4: Study Area Comments and Responses		
Study Area Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Virginia Coverage	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Include the Hampton Roads metro area and the Chesapeake Bay Urban Crescent in the ‘Study Area’ to be used by FRA and NEC Commission.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Please include Richmond, VA in your NEC planning.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The Norfolk area needs to be better connected to the other large job centers of the northeast.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...we encourage you to expand your Study Area to include Virginia’s Golden Crescent.”</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS Study Area includes the metropolitan areas¹ surrounding the NEC Spine and connecting corridors between Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Hampton Roads and Richmond, VA, and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process.</p>
New York-Pennsylvania Coverage	<p><i>“I noticed that the New York - Newark - Scranton - Binghamton corridor is not included in the Study Area. That appears to be a gaping omission among the feeder corridors to the NEC spine...”</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE program will consider potential services beyond the Study Area, which would connect to the NEC Spine, in the alternatives development process.</p>
New England Coverage	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Massachusetts, New England, as well as the entire NEC would likewise benefit by extending the NEC northward from Boston. The population density north of Boston to northeastern Massachusetts and Portland, Maine and Manchester, New Hampshire, and eventually Montreal, Canada would be well served.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Multimodal transportation, especially high-speed rail, from New England to Montreal is important to commercial interests and our prosperity along these routes and elsewhere.”</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE program Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Portland, ME; Manchester, NH; and Montreal, Canada and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process.</p>

¹ Consistent with U.S. Census Bureau definitions, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are one or more adjacent counties or county equivalents that have at least one urban core area of at least 50,000 population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the core.

Purpose & Need

Approximately 13% of all comments focused on the NEC FUTURE program's Purpose & Need and goals. The Purpose & Need Statement will play a pivotal role in every stage of the NEC FUTURE program. It defines the purpose of the program, the present and future challenges facing the Northeast region, and the need for passenger rail transportation solutions to address these challenges. The NEC FUTURE goals will form the basis for evaluating and screening alternatives and eventually recommending a preferred investment program for the NEC. As such, the program goals must broadly define those elements that proposed alternatives should possess to best address identified needs and meet the program purpose. Overall, the comments in this category address the specific elements of the Purpose & Need; goals; and the relationship of this program to other government and transportation agency plans, policies, and projects.

Table 5 summarizes comments and responses on the Purpose & Need. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Economic Competitiveness & Development	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“We cannot sit idle anymore. The world is moving past us... countries in Asia and Europe are going to have a better rail system... than we ever can hope for. And we are behind the eight ball and playing catch-up. Those countries see the need for rail service. They see the need. There is a need, people.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...we believe the FRA should develop an intercity rail investment plan that enhances the economic productivity and competitiveness of the Northeast mega-region’s² major job centers, one which includes the capital city of Providence, Rhode Island, by reducing travel times between major markets.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“We can use infrastructure to propel economic development, create quality jobs and improve the lives of all Americans.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“In no uncertain terms, intercity and commuter rail are essential to the economic development of our region. The highways are heavily congested; there are no major airports in the region; and there is an urgent need to upgrade the existing rail infrastructure.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Northeast Corridor Infrastructure improvements are a must if the United States wants to stay economically competitive in the 21st century.”</i></p>	<p>The Purpose & Need for the NEC FUTURE program states that major investments in the NEC and other transportation modes are needed for the Northeast to grow and remain economically competitive in national and international markets. The FRA recognizes the role transportation and mobility play in influencing economic growth and development. The program goals identified in the Scoping Package will be refined to better articulate this relationship between mobility and economics.</p>

² A megaregion consists of two or more cities. The Northeast Megaregion stretches some 500 miles down the East Coast of the United States from Boston through New York City to Washington, D.C.

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Sustainability/Social Equity	<p><i>“One dimension that is missing from the listed goals in Section 2. 3 and should be included in the subsequent statement of Purpose & Need is a focus on the third “E” of sustainability - social equity - in addition to the environment and the economy. Efforts should be made to make rail service more affordable and hence available to more travelers.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the importance of considering a broad range of mobility options for a diverse cross-section of travelers. As such the program goals will be refined to better reflect the affordability aspect of passenger rail services. In addition, specific impacts to environmental justice communities associated with program alternatives will be assessed in the Tier 1 EIS.</p>
Capacity	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“...consider options for improving performance on the Boston-Washington Northeast Corridor, planning for much needed increases in Hudson River passenger rail capacity is critical.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...ensure that the Program provides for a sufficient level of additional future capacity above those levels required to support planned service levels in order to accommodate unforeseen increases in demand or subsequent demand occurring beyond the study horizon.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Expansion of rail capacity allows the railroads providing service in the NEC to offer additional seats, including in peak periods when commuter flows are highest. ... Once capacity has been maximized by this approach, it is necessary to increase the capacity of the infrastructure itself to accommodate more train services. If this is not done, the only realistic alternative is to increase fare levels to manage demand downwards to within available capacity levels.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Transportation officials must work collaboratively ... to substantially increase railroad capacity between Northern New Jersey and Penn Station. An enhanced Northeast Corridor is vital for the tri-state area to compete in an increasingly complex, 21st century global economy.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the importance of the NEC Spine and its connecting corridors in meeting existing and future demand. The program goals and objectives will be refined to reflect this.</p>

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Travel Time	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“We recommend that FRA set ambitious goals of cutting 30 minutes from the travel time to NY, and a comparable amount of travel time to Boston, and that these improvements be one of the first upgrades to the NEC.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...time makes a difference even for regional travel. And so one of the urgings is to look at making sure that in the Northeast Corridor, upgrades you’re considering, that speed of regional rail is also enhanced.”</i></p>	<p>A broad range of alternatives, including improved reliability and travel time along the NEC, as well as other operational improvements, will be considered in the Service Development Plan and Tier 1 EIS.</p>
Reliability, Redundancy, State of Good Repair	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“I am less concerned with true “high speed” rail, and more concerned with frequent, reasonably fast service--with frequency and reliability and connectedness more important than absolute speed.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The NEC FUTURE program is a vital step in defining and creating adequate capacity for the NEC so our nation will not need to turn to alternative and more costly modes of transportation, which may pose greater threats to our environment.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...to achieve a state of good repair on the existing corridor to provide more reliable, frequent, and faster commuter passenger service...”</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the importance of improving safety, reliability, and redundancy. The goals of the NEC FUTURE program include identifying and developing a program that provides attractive, competitive and high-quality passenger service. Investment in the existing NEC is a priority for the FRA. NEC FUTURE program goals will be refined to better articulate this.</p>

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Rail Network/Connectivity	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“I’d like to see the NEC Future project explore options to come as close as possible to having direct connections to all subway, light rail, and commuter rail lines in the greater NEC area.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The Northeast Corridor rail system is critical to both current and future economic prosperity and mobility for residents of this state and certainly as a whole to the larger Northeast region. A dedicated high speed corridor should serve major population and employment centers. Those centers must have extensive, high quality and frequent commuter rail service that makes critical connections for the riding public.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“It is important that Federal and regional transit agencies work together to advance an affordable and passenger-friendly plan that serves both regional and intercity travelers.”</i></p>	<p>Service and market impacts related to intermodal connections will be addressed within the Service Development Plan and the Tier 1 EIS. Specific improvements which emerge from the Tier 1 EIS would be the subject of separate project-level studies.</p>
Relationship to Agency Plans and Policies	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“[Municipal/County/Regional] Plan envisions a clean, safe, culturally diverse community supported by an efficient, flexible, and economically viable transportation system that is essential to the growth and prosperity of the City. Rail is a critical component...to reduce overall dependence on the automobile, and in addressing the challenges - traffic congestion, oil dependence, air and noise pollution, efficiency, economics, and health.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...reports by NEC transit agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) may also contain useful background information that might be included by reference in the document.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is coordinating with the responsible agencies to incorporate appropriate information from related plans, studies, or programs.</p>

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Relationship to Transportation Plans and Policies	<i>"We also believe that it is important for the study to identify all the rail discussions and plans that are already in play...Each of the railroads should be surveyed for rail goals, policies, and recommendations. Each of the railroads should be surveyed for plans, studies and other input."</i>	The FRA is coordinating with states and MPOs concerning relevant plans and programs, including state rail plans.
Relationship to Transportation Projects	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"Content-wise, one option to look at. . . is now nine years old from the MIS Summary Report for ARC, which shows a connection from Penn, New York Penn to Grand Central."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"Coordinate with planning studies underway, including NY Penn Station, Gateway Tunnel, NYC extension of #7 Subway into NJ."</i></p>	The FRA will coordinate with the responsible agencies to incorporate appropriate information from related studies.
Future Demand	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"Travel demand projections, need to include consideration of a more varied future by developing "what if" scenarios to contrast with basing the forecasts on a projection of past trends."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"I see a future in shared transportation and a multiplicity of options, so that I would like to encourage big thinking."</i></p>	The FRA is considering forecast growth in passenger demand and ridership in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs and market growth. The FRA will coordinate with the appropriate agencies to incorporate a range of growth forecasts throughout the corridor.

Table 5: Purpose & Need Comments and Responses		
Purpose & Need Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Governance	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“ . . . if any effort in the Northeast Corridor is going to be made to promote a seamless transportation network in the northeast, it’s important that all public agencies, transit agencies and every agency work collaboratively. . . work closely together in collaboration and provide seamless information . . . and thorough information and services as was mentioned before.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Finally, while it is tempting for a project at this scale to think according to top-down national-policy approaches, the realities of federal funding and political uncertainties make bottom-up approaches increasingly important. Therefore, the EIS should recognize the importance of greater stakeholder involvement from state and local governments and regional businesses - not only in planning, but also in finance, management, and implementation.”</i></p>	<p>The benefits, impacts and costs of developing collaborative relationships with other federal and state agencies will be considered, particularly when exploring cost and funding of any Reasonable Alternative.</p>

Alternatives

Commenters provided ideas, preferences or concerns about alternatives to be considered in the NEC FUTURE program. Over 34% of all individual comments received were related to alternatives. Of the more than 800 individual comments received on alternatives, over half provided suggestions about specific alignments, stations or infrastructure improvements. While these site-specific or project-specific suggestions are valuable input to the overall NEC FUTURE program study process, the Tier 1 EIS represents a broader, more programmatic view of the full range of possible corridor-wide alternatives. Site-specific or project-specific suggestions included references to improvements at specific stations, upgrades to specific services or alignments (e. g., specific location and alignment of a new trans-Hudson tunnel). These location specific recommendations will be broadly considered in the Tier 1 EIS and would be the subject of subsequent project-level reviews.

Some comments identified near-term, low-cost investments to improve the existing NEC while others called on FRA to ‘think big’ and consider improvements even beyond the next 30 – 40 years. Themes for which multiple comments were received include improvements to the existing NEC and its connecting corridors; NEC state of good repair; intercity, regional, and commuter services; NEC capacity; incremental or phased investment strategies; intermodal connectivity; high-speed rail; organizational and operating practices; fares and affordability; customer amenities; technology; freight; and selection of alternatives. Three specific improvements were the subject of many comments: the trans-Hudson tunnel/Gateway project (NY and NJ); a Penn Station – Grand Central Terminal connection (NY); and the North-South Rail Link (Boston, MA).

Table 6, summarizes comments and responses on the Alternatives. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Improvements to Existing NEC & Connecting Corridors	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Until the present NEC is used to its full capacity, justification for a new railroad is lacking.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Work into the plan near-term/low-investment opportunities to improve capacity, build ridership, and to grow revenues and market share. Here are a couple of examples: (a) Through running of MTA and NJ Transit services via Penn Station; (b) A Jamaica-New Rochelle connection via available and underutilized tracks and unused track space.”</i></p>	<p>Opportunities to create operating efficiencies to better utilize existing capacity will be considered in the Service Development Plan (SDP) and Tier 1 EIS alternatives development process.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>NEC State of Good Repair</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“As we contemplate the future and address those needs, it is important to also reflect on the critical importance of achieving a state of good repair on the Northeast Corridor today. Both Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT experience all too often failures of existing critical infrastructure and limitations of functionally obsolete components.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The heavily-used rail corridor from New York City to New Haven should be a priority for early investment in state of good repair and enhancement.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRICP) should ensure that the NEC is in a State of Good Repair with high degree of service reliability, and should address capacity and service improvement needs. If the NEC is not brought to and maintained at a state of good repair, the resulting unreliable infrastructure will not be able to provide the baseline capacity or trip-times that might become the foundation of the no-action NEPA and SDP scenario.”</i></p>	<p>Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process. Investment in the existing NEC will continue to be a priority.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses

Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Intercity, Commuter and Regional Services</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“...Intercity and commuter rail are essential to our region.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Today, thousands depend on access to the Northeast Corridor for Amtrak and commuter rail service, including brand new connections to the new Rhode Island stations at T.F. Green.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...look at working with the organizations that run commuter rail along the Northeast Corridor, ensuring that they work together and efficiently with those organizations. For example, on the Providence Line, the MBTA runs 80-mile-per-hour diesel push-pull locomotive service. This will always be incompatible with high-speed rail at 150 miles per hour if they want to increase capacity.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“It is of little help to zoom along at high speed only to sit and wait for hours for the next link in the journey. Numerous connecting commuter train lines offer less than one train an hour. Effort needs to be invested to ensure that the entire network operates at frequent intervals and that connections are made between all of the carriers and services that may be used for the total journey from Portland to Newport News.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is considering the full range of services currently operated along the NEC Spine and its connecting corridors, including intercity, regional and commuter services. Opportunities to optimize operations and improve the integration and connectivity of this passenger rail network will be considered by the FRA in the NEC FUTURE program.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>NEC Capacity</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“I would like to encourage a system that doesn't just handle projected capacity, but handles the kind of capacity that happens if half of the users in the Northeast Corridor don't use their cars anymore.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“More than anything, I would like to see capacity and thus supply increased. I want more people to be able to have affordable access to the NEC. As a rail corridor in the nation's and the world's premier megapolitan region, it seems that inter-city rail ought to be able to carry many more passengers than the current 6 percent total mode share that it does today.”</i></p>	<p>Improvements to the existing NEC from Washington, D.C. to Boston, MA are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process. Additional capacity, improved reliability and travel times will be evaluated in developing these alternatives.</p>
<p>Incremental or Phased Investment</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Given the obvious limitations on funding in the foreseeable future, an incremental approach to expanding service development will ensure that “perfect” does not become the enemy of possible, and that a focus is maintained on identifying rail corridor improvements that can be realized in a reasonable amount of time.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...the phasing of the project [Gateway Tunnels] should start with implementing a first tunnel so that it relieves some of the traffic congestion, particularly in New York Penn, and provides more flexibility and, more importantly, to the Northeast Corridor, provides redundancy.”</i></p>	<p>Incremental or phased improvements to the existing NEC from Washington, D.C. to Boston, MA are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the development of alternatives for the NEC FUTURE program. A broad range of alternatives, including those that can be implemented in the nearer term will be considered in the Service Development Plan and Tier 1 EIS.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses

Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Intermodal Connectivity</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Please incorporate intermodal considerations as part of the planning process, specifically intercity and commuter bus...In other cities, “transit” hubs have been developed or are being planned in a seemingly parallel and distinct process...”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Full intermodal cooperation and coordination...will be important to create opportunities for it to occur...good physical connectivity between airports and the rail system can have positive implication for both industries.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“We are also keenly interested in promoting the connectivity of any new service with the existing commuter and intercity rail services in the northeast to maximize public return on investment in this system.”</i></p>	<p>Intermodal connections and opportunities to increase travel benefits with improved customer services will be considered and are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program goals.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Operations and Service	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"[look at] The price vs. speed trade-off (maintenance and capital) of very high speed rail (200 to 220mph) vs. reliable 160 mph or so speeds."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"I also recommend upgrades of Keystone Service between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and the Empire Service between NYC and Albany."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"Whereas, if there [was] service that went...straight from Hempstead to Trenton... that would be a way of relieving this congestion, as well as providing very, very significantly improved and more desirable transportation alternatives for people who live in the region."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"I think one of the detriments to better ridership on the corridor in the Baltimore to Richmond zone is the fact that you have this . . . long time wasted at Washington Union Station. . . . you should plan out for the implementation of thru service either through diesel electric locomotives or, I know currently you already have catenary poles that run down from Washington Station . . . to Potomac Yards on the Virginia side. You might be able to extend it to Alexandria or something and pick up passengers there."</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE program will identify levels of investment that provide for physical improvements, technologies and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for commuter, regional and intercity passenger rail service, including opportunities for service to new markets and increased service to existing markets. This will include better ways of serving connecting corridors.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses

Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>On-Corridor/Off-Corridor Routes</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“There are two other routes: (1) Amtrak northern route Waterbury-Danbury-Hartford, and (2) Long Island alignment proposed by University of PA...the evaluation of these routes go beyond pure engineering and cost, to look at network connectivity...”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“I am writing to express my concerns about the current plan to route the proposed NEC upgrade project through Danbury and Hartford, instead of Stamford, Bridgeport, and New Haven.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Routing options that bypass Philadelphia should be eliminated. In addition to being a major departure and arrival point, it is an efficient connection point for Harrisburg, Atlantic City, Philadelphia International Airport, and suburban Philadelphia destinations.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Commuters who live between Perryville, MD and Baltimore, MD, should have access to trains that make all local stops in between Perryville and Baltimore, and with one set of trains running express from Baltimore to DC along the new 220 MPH alignment, and the other set of trains running express from Wilmington to Philadelphia.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Will the NEC look at former rail lines (many which have been converted to rails-to-trails lines)?”</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the importance of service to markets along the existing intercity, regional and commuter rail routes. The NEC FUTURE program will identify the levels of investment that provide for physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
High-Speed Rail	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Northeast Corridor is the ideal case for true high speed rail service. Please do build the rail, we deserve it, we need it and we need it sooner than 2040 and we can get it done sooner so hope you can expedite the process.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Please continue to fight for high-speed rail in the Northeast. We need it, because the region is only going to get more congested in the future. All of that time sitting in traffic represents so many lost dollars and so much lost time, and that's not good for anybody.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“I just urge that the upgrades improve the existing shoreline corridor to feed into the high speed line. One way or the other, I hope the high traffic NE Corridor gets a full high speed rail line...”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...there's no more room to build more highways or more airports, and our mobility is endangered by depending just strictly on oil. So high-speed rail is certainly the way to go.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“This plan should advance an integrated strategy that supports the development of true high-speed rail in the NE, as well as faster and more reliable commuter and regional intercity rail service on existing corridors.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...build two new, dedicated tracks for true high-speed rail service the length of the corridor to increase capacity for future growth and thereby reducing trip times.”</i></p>	<p>NEC FUTURE will examine the market for higher-speed rail services along the NEC, and, assuming it is warranted, will evaluate where best to provide that new service. This is likely to include both on-corridor and off-corridor routes. The analysis will consider network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets and on the region's transportation system, environment and economy. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is a corridor-level analysis. More detailed alignment issues would be the subject of subsequent project-level environmental reviews.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses

Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Organizational and Operating Practices</p>	<p><i>“In order to cost effectively improve the Northeast Corridor, the FRA and Amtrak should adopt the motto, change organization and operational practices first and foremost. If that doesn’t work, then look at fixing electronics and software systems. Finally, if nothing else works, then look at changing concrete in order to upgrade the line.”</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE alternatives development process will focus on service, railroad operations and infrastructure improvements to enhance service within the NEC. The alternatives will include a wide range of proposals to increase capacity, enhance safety, improve reliability, and reduce trip time, including those to improve operations.</p>
<p>Fares and Affordability</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“This high speed line should have affordable everyday fares.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“We recommend that steps be taken to introduce a viable rail alternative for price-conscious travelers, which would serve to divert such travelers from buses on highways to the rails of the NEC and connecting lines.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“An update, no matter how welcome, would be pointless however, unless the cost of using the system is addressed as well.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA will explore a variety of service and operation plans that include a number of pricing strategies as variables. The NEC FUTURE alternatives development process will consider a mix of service types and fare structures to meet different traveler and market needs.</p>
<p>Customer Amenities</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“And in lieu of very high speed...consider higher frequency and reduced price as a way to attract more riders.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“When will trains become bike friendly?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Make stations friendly travel centers, with basic amenities: seats, information about local connecting service and for other key stations, map and a summary of service frequency on major routes, rack with timetables for connecting rail service. These amenities could increase use of the NEC by casual travelers.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the importance of providing attractive, competitive, high-quality, and user friendly passenger rail service to customers, which is consistent with the overall NEC FUTURE program goals and will be broadly considered in the alternatives development process. Specific implementation details will be considered in subsequent project-level analyses.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Technology	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"I am writing to go on record in the current scoping process for the Northeast Corridor EIS to make the point that Maglev should be seriously considered in this process."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"...wants to use this scoping process to officially go on record to urge the Federal Railroad Administration to do a side-by-side comparison of the true costs and benefits of high speed rail and maglev."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"...it would be nice in the future if a passenger from Amtrak or from one of the regional commuter agencies would be able to have thru ticketing."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"...Amtrak should take advantage of the technology to go to double-decker bi-levels, because it would lower the cost per seat mile, the ticket prices."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"I'd like to see some thought about commuter rail on that corridor also being electrified."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"So if we have technology and it can speed up our travel time from Washington, D.C. to Boston by using faster technology, I think that would be a wise investment than to go with old fashioned technology that may be limited in 10 years now, 20 years from now."</i></p>	<p>Technologies, such as maglev, will be considered in the alternatives development process and included in the Initial Alternatives list. The alternatives development process will be documented as part of the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses

Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Freight</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“I know there are freight needs and they're legitimate and they do need to be addressed. And freight trains travel slower, generally, on the corridor than the passenger trains do and the freight's speed should be speeded up somewhat too.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Win-Win opportunities for both passenger and freight rail.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“As alternatives are identified and evaluated for future investments, network alignment, and operations plans, it is important to consider the impacts on freight service. Those impacts include the ability of freight railroads to grow and deliver economic, environmental and social benefits to communities along the Corridor and to the Nation.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Current freight operators are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities within the NEC FUTURE program.</p>
<p>Selecting Reasonable Alternatives</p>	<p><i>“If you look at the way they propose phasing it, there are four segments from Washington to here. Four segments from here to New York. And five segments onto Boston. I don't see how in January we're going to see a reasonable set of alternatives selected from the multitude of input which you've had here tonight.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is committed to a transparent and expeditious study process that includes public participation across a broad range of interested parties. A framework has been established for categorizing and defining these numerous ideas into a set of Initial Alternatives. Once that is complete, the initial Alternatives will be consolidated and organized into the Preliminary Alternatives and then screened to a set of Reasonable Alternatives for consideration in the Tier 1 EIS.</p>

Table 6: Alternatives Comments and Responses		
Alternatives Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Trans-Hudson Tunnel (NY and NJ)	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Right now, among it's [NEC's] highest priorities must be rebuilding between Newark and Manhattan, including adding tunnel capacity to Penn Station New York, and eventually a connection to the new lower level at GCT for LIRR...”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The fact that there's just one tunnel going in and one tunnel going out creates problems on the weekends when you're running 30 minutes in and 30 minutes out. It creates problems at rush hour because you're funneling a lot of trains into a single -- a single tunnel. Additional tunnels would help that.”</i></p>	<p>Alternatives for increasing trans-Hudson capacity between New Jersey and New York will be broadly considered in the alternatives development process. Alignment-specific details will be considered in subsequent project-level environmental reviews.</p>
Penn Station – Grand Central Terminal Connection (New York, NY)	<p><i>“...the key for the corridor, we believe, is that a connection between New York Penn and Grand Central terminal. Without that, Penn Station is overloaded. All the new riders, most of them are taking subways. And the way to really gain an improved regional mobility is to provide people with a one-seat ride.”</i></p>	<p>Alternative routes that include a possible connection between Grand Central Terminal and Penn Station will be considered as part of the alternatives development process. Alignment-specific details will be considered in subsequent project-level environmental reviews.</p>
North-South Rail Link (Boston, MA)	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“No study of increasing capacity on the north end of the NEC would be complete without examination of a rail link between the two major passenger stations in Boston.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The study should include an assumption that a North Station-South Station rail link will be established, allowing The Downeaster and future New Hampshire rail lines (including resumption of rail to Montreal via Concord, and Lebanon, New Hampshire).”</i></p>	<p>The NEC FUTURE Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will also be considered. Within the Boston metropolitan area, the North-South Rail Link will be considered in the alternatives development process.</p>

NEPA Process

Approximately 1% of all comments received during scoping addressed the NEPA Process. Comments addressed several NEPA-related themes. Some comments expressed concern with the length of time required for the NEC FUTURE study and urged expedited project delivery. Other comments focused on specific aspects of the NEPA process, such as the tiered approach to the EIS, federal oversight, or targeted stakeholder engagement. Comments regarding the assessment of impacts to the affected environment are summarized in the following section on Affected Environment.

Table 7 summarizes comments and responses on the NEPA Process. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 7: NEPA Process Comments and Responses		
NEPA Process Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Schedule	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"...This need is so urgent that it cannot wait for a 3-year P-EIS in the 21st century this is an eternity."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"...they're going to take four years to do an environmental report. And I understand that the law requires a very thorough investigation, but the material I've seen outside says the demand for service is increasing and increasing. And I'm very concerned that by the time they get the study done, conditions will have changed."</i></p>	<p>The FRA recognizes the urgency of needs along the NEC and is committed to advancing the Tier 1 EIS and SDP as expeditiously as possible, but remains equally committed to making sure that a transparent and inclusive process is conducted and that sound technical analyses are provided.</p>

Table 7: NEPA Process Comments and Responses		
NEPA Process Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Tiered Approach	<i>"We are slightly concerned about what a Tier 1 scoping process is for a nine-state process or eight-state and D.C. It's supposed to be some broad overview. I don't understand how it's going to work compared to what we've seen for Environmental Impact Statements in the past in the NEPA or 109 [sic] process."</i>	A tiered approach was selected for the NEC FUTURE program due to the scope, complexity, and long-term nature of this multi-state planning effort. "Tiering" takes a broad approach to the overall analysis and typically uses readily-available information to establish baseline conditions and conduct analyses. The affected environment will be documented primarily through the use of existing mapping, studies and reports and a wide range of federal and state resource databases. For this Tier 1 EIS, no field work or subsurface testing will be completed. More detailed analysis will occur at subsequent phases of project development.
Relationship to Tier 2 Environmental Reviews	<i>"I assume that the subsequent SDP, as well as an updated (FRA-Amtrak) fleet strategy, will help inform the current and future needs for NEC facilities; but will the NEC FUTURE program identify future capital programs and streamline the environmental process for new facilities (stations, maintenance facilities, crew bases, etc.)?"</i>	The NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS and SDP will set the stage for subsequent project-level environmental reviews. Through the Tier 1 EIS, the FRA will work with affected stakeholders to identify key issues early for resolution during Tier 1 documentation and to identify opportunities for efficiencies in advancing subsequent project-level reviews.

Table 7: NEPA Process Comments and Responses

NEPA Process Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Federal Oversight	<i>“Expand federal oversight to include FTA, FHWA and FAA, and other appropriate agencies.”</i>	The NEC FUTURE program is a multi-state planning effort managed and directed by the FRA in collaboration with other NEC stakeholders including states with intercity passenger service on the NEC or connected to it; Amtrak; and the commuter and freight railroads that share usage of the NEC infrastructure. In support of this multi-state and multi-operator effort, the FRA is similarly coordinating through the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) with each of the modal agencies, including the FTA, FHWA, and FAA.
Engaging Potentially Impacted Groups	<i>“If a new alignment for high-speed passenger trains is chosen to serve Philadelphia International Airport, existing communities through which the new alignment might run such as Eddystone, Ridley Township, and Essington and Lester in Tinicum Township need to be consulted from the beginning of the planning process.”</i>	The FRA is committed to an extensive outreach program with a broad range of stakeholder groups including local government, airports and other related entities. Any site- or project-specific improvements would likely be considered in subsequent project-level environmental reviews.

Affected Environment

The broad category of Affected Environment, addressing regulation of or potential impacts to both natural and man-made resources, comprised approximately 4% of all comments. The range of comments generally included identification of programs and agencies responsible for protecting specific resources, requests and suggestions to avoid or minimize impacts, and acknowledgement of potential project benefits. While not captured in this section of the report, it is important to note that many regulatory and resource agencies submitted comments pertaining to the affected environment (see Section IV for further details).

Comments made with regard to the affected environment will be considered during the development of the Tier 1 EIS and addressed through coordination with the responsible resource and regulatory agencies. Major themes in this category include: land use and parks; socioeconomics; cultural resources; air quality; climate change; safety and security; and local considerations.

Table 8 summarizes comments and responses on Affected Environment. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 8: Affected Environment Comments and Responses		
Affected Environment Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Land Use and Parks/Green Infrastructure	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“I do not think a new swath of tracks should be laid through Connecticut. This would deface peaceful communities and rural areas and cut towns in half.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The East Coast Greenway runs through Eddystone and Ridley and Tinicum Townships and it needs to be incorporated into FRA plans if the existing Conrail Chester Secondary line right-of-way will be used for high-speed passenger train service to connect with Philadelphia International Airport.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning for the program progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the FRA will assess the potential effects on these resources. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.</p>

Table 8: Affected Environment Comments and Responses		
Affected Environment Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Socio-Economics	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“Our population grew 5% in the last decade, which is one of the highest growth rates of any city in the Northeast, and our jobs base expanded 2% in just the past year. We held our jobs base through the recession with this very proximate walk to work transit-oriented development pattern that’s emerging in New Haven. I’d ask you at every level of your analysis to do that deeper dive to understand what’s happening in the major cities, be it Stamford, Bridgeport, Hartford or New Haven, so we can plan our service accordingly.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“... what this is all going to do to ticket prices. ... taking the regional at \$49 between Boston and New York is still much above the Mega Bus prices and the Bolt Bus.”</i></p>	<p>A broad-level evaluation of the effects of the NEC FUTURE program on existing socioeconomic conditions will be included as part of the Tier 1 EIS. General fare pricing for intercity passenger rail will also be reviewed.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p><i>“...the present Northeast Corridor, parts of which date to the mid-19th Century, is a treasure trove of historic railroad bridges, rights-of-way and technology. We would like to see as much of this notable infrastructure preserved as is possible consistent with the changes to be proposed in the ongoing NEC Future study.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning for the program progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the FRA will assess the potential effects of alternatives on these resources, including historic resources. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.</p>

Table 8: Affected Environment Comments and Responses		
Affected Environment Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Air Quality	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“The NEC Future Plan should ensure there are no adverse air quality impacts or competing commitments to equipment and resources.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“[We are] interested in the North-South Rail Link because of the vast improvements of air quality that we will get. It will also have excellent financial effects on the City of Boston and many other desirable attributes.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...improved high speed ground transportation could dramatically reduce shuttle air travel in the corridor and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. Through the NEC FUTURE program, the FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment, including air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
Climate Change	<p><i>“... adaptability and resiliency of rail to climate change and sea level rise.”</i></p>	<p>Climate change and sea-level rise will be considered and evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS at a broad level.</p>
Safety and Security	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“...need security cameras on the Northeast Corridor line and outdoor to watch out for trespassers.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...[Passenger Trains] needs security cameras because their riders...and their employees could be at risk.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The planning process needs to consider the safety implications of proposed options for local communities...as it relates to vehicles at grade crossings and pedestrians near or over the NEC rights-of-way.”</i></p>	<p>General safety and security needs of the overall program will be evaluated as part of the Tier 1 EIS. Detailed safety and security planning will be conducted at future stages of project development.</p>

Table 8: Affected Environment Comments and Responses

Affected Environment Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Local Considerations	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“The planning process needs to consider and weigh local economic, community and environmental impacts of program alternatives and options due to corridor expansion, service expansion, and improved/increased modal interconnections, including noise, traffic impacts of closing at grade crossings, and road, transit and parking capabilities to handle expected traffic at intermodal connections.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“Large amount of vacant and underutilized land adjacent to 30th street station, Zoo Junction area, North Philadelphia Station that can be developed with office and apartment building. Without expending any funds to relocate the NEC, Philadelphia can expand from one core area to three, with two situated at NEC station.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The planning process needs to identify opportunities for increased economic development within local communities through which the NEC runs...including transit oriented development, air rights development, and related commercial and residential development near modal interconnections with the NEC.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies. Similarly, the NEC FUTURE alternatives may include expansion of existing rail stations and the development of new rail stations within the NEC FUTURE program Study Area. The FRA will take into account areas of vacant and underutilized land during planning efforts that may offer some benefit to the NEC FUTURE program. However, detailed analysis on potential redevelopment opportunities would be conducted at future stages of project development and would be the subject of separate project-level studies.</p>

Cost and Funding

Approximately 3% of all comments received addressed Cost and Funding. Many commenters cited the need to include long-term maintenance costs in the analysis. The costs and benefits of alternative routes, modes, and services will be considered in the alternatives development process. Commenters also raised concerns with overall program finance and funding.

Table 9 summarizes comments and responses on Cost and Funding. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 9: Cost and Funding Comments and Responses		
Cost & Funding Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Capital, Operation, and Maintenance Costs</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“With respect to skipping Hartford, Wilmington, and Baltimore, I’d like to see detailed information about the costs and benefits of bypass tracks for Hartford, Wilmington, and Baltimore.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...[we] urge the Federal Railroad Administration to do a side-by-side comparison of the true costs and benefits of high speed rail and maglev. Having seen the study results for the project, we have become aware that maglev has lower annual operating costs primarily because the technology uses less energy.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“When there is an appropriate opportunity to analyze the feasibility of the North South Rail Link, it would be helpful to have a reliable cost estimate if future funding becomes available.”</i></p>	<p>The benefits, costs, and impacts of different alternatives will be considered in the alternatives development process which will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.</p>

Table 9: Cost and Funding Comments and Responses		
Cost & Funding Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Funding	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“The issue of funding future operation, maintenance, and keeping the NEC up-to-date should be included within the scope of the study. It will be of little use to expend a great sum to build a super railroad which cannot be operated or maintained, or which cannot be kept in a state of the art condition.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“I would recommend some sort of collaboration with the toll authorities between [DC] and New York where...the authorities are approached and their elected representatives get some steady source of funding for these massive capital improvements projects that are absolutely necessary.”</i></p>	<p>Funding for operations, maintenance, and modernization of the NEC will be considered in the alternatives development process.</p>

Public and Agency Involvement

Comments regarding Public and Agency Involvement were received from a broad range of stakeholders, including local government representatives, interest groups, and residents. Approximately 15 percent of all comments received during scoping addressed Public and Agency Involvement.

Several recurring themes included the importance of an open and inclusive public involvement process, concern regarding advance notice of the scoping meetings, and the suggestion to form a citizens group to maintain public participation and monitor progress.

Table 10 summarizes comments and responses on Public and Agency Involvement. For each theme, representative quotes have been excerpted from a group of statements that express similar concerns. In addition, a response is provided for each comment theme.

Table 10: Public and Agency Involvement Comments and Responses		
Public and Agency Involvement Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Open and Inclusive Process	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“An extensive public input process should be part of the study process.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“...mobilize the public. Get the public engaged...especially for a project of this magnitude, I think we need a commensurate commitment in terms of promotion of the relations, public education, branding this -- this project, establishing who's in charge, who's the coordinator, making it easy for the public to relate to the project through public service announcements and all kinds of media exposure.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“The planning process needs to be inclusive with active participation by all major stakeholders, including both public and private sector stakeholders likely to be impacted by whatever happens to the NEC; various service modes and operators which use the NEC, including rail passenger, rail freight, and intermodal freight; and communities and businesses located along and within the NEC and other transportation corridors which connect to the NEC.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is committed to an ongoing and open public participation process through which concepts, criteria, and alternatives will be discussed. A variety of strategies are being used to inform and engage the many stakeholders. These include interviews, briefings with organizations and public officials, public meetings, and workshops and webinars to engage agencies and groups throughout the corridor. Other communication methods that will be used throughout the duration of the project include e-mail blasts, newsletters and posting of project information on the web site.</p>

Table 10: Public and Agency Involvement Comments and Responses		
Public and Agency Involvement Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Stakeholder Involvement in Alternatives Evaluation	<i>"A precondition for creating an appropriate set of outcome-based goals, objectives, and performance measures includes having stakeholders provide input regarding how they feel good performance should be defined. This process will create a clear and uniform framework with which to evaluate the alternatives developed."</i>	The FRA agrees that it is important to get broad input into the entire alternatives development process, including the goals, objectives and measures for success, and will continue to provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholder involvement.
Meeting Notice	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"NEC Future Scoping Package confirms scoping meetings, dates, times and locations should have been published and communicated at least 30 days prior to their start. However, newspaper notification was 6 days prior, e-mail notification 7 days prior, website notification was 10-14 days prior."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"I would urge you to enhance the procedure here. In particular, the -- the comment period should really be extended beyond the current September 14th deadline. I would request that you add an additional 60 days given the magnitude and the complexity of this project."</i></p>	<p>The scoping process began on June 22, 2012 with a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the <i>Federal Register</i> and the availability of the Scoping Package on the NEC FUTURE website. The NOI included notice that agency and public scoping meetings would be held between August 13, 2012 and August 23, 2012 in each of the NEC's nine states and the District of Columbia. Confirmation of specific scoping meeting dates, times, and venues were subsequently publicized in newspaper advertisements, news releases and media alerts, e-mail notices, print communications, web-based announcements, and mailings.</p> <p>The FRA extended the scoping comment period from the original deadline of September 14, 2012 to October 19, 2012, resulting in an overall scoping comment period of 119 days.</p>

Table 10: Public and Agency Involvement Comments and Responses		
Public and Agency Involvement Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Citizen’s Advisory Committee</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“A Citizens Advisory Committee should be established to contain responsible members of the users and potential users of the corridor, representing the stakeholders of the project – the public, their political representatives, advocates like our organization, and the press – that should be kept informed about decisions being considered and made.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“An extensive public input process should be part of the study process. . . Interested parties should be invited to join a citizen’s advisory project committee. This committee should be provided with frequent updates on both the ongoing work and on the soon-to-begin work.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“We need more citizen participation in the form of a regional citizen’s liaison committee, citizen’s advisory committee...”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is committed to regular interaction with concerned citizens during the development of the NEC FUTURE program. Communication methods suited to the scale of the 457-mile corridor will be used, including public meetings, regional workshops, the NEC FUTURE website, newsletters and e-mail communication. In addition, the FRA anticipates providing specific forums to engage rail system users.</p>
<p>Targeted Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>“...urges the FRA to engage in significant outreach to members of the business community throughout the corridor.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>“We also urge the FRA to engage in a significant outreach program to members of the business community throughout the corridor, both to gain feedback about potential demand for rail improvements and to educate them about the project.”</i></p>	<p>The FRA is committed to an ongoing and open public participation process through which concepts, criteria, and alternatives will be discussed. A variety of strategies are being used to inform and engage the many stakeholders. These include interviews, briefings with organizations and public officials, public meetings, and workshops and webinars to engage agencies, businesses, rail users, and groups throughout the corridor. Other communication methods that will be used throughout the duration of the project include e-mail blasts, newsletters and posting of project information on the web site.</p>

Table 10: Public and Agency Involvement Comments and Responses

Public and Agency Involvement Themes	Representative Comments	Response
<p>Participation of Low Income and Minority Populations in Scoping</p>	<p><i>"I want to speak first to the notice issue that was just mentioned and the fact that in Boston now, the population is more than 50 percent people of color, and there are none or very few people of color in this audience right now."</i></p>	<p>Executive Order (EO) 12898, <i>Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations</i>, requires federal agencies to ensure greater public participation from communities with substantial minority and/or low-income populations. To this end, the NEC FUTURE outreach program publicized the scoping meetings through advertisements in publications targeted to minority audiences. In later phases, public outreach will include contacting established groups that represent targeted communities for their input and assistance.</p>
<p>Location of Future Public Meetings</p>	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p><i>"Schedule some NEC study groups, agency scoping meetings, and public hearings in Virginia along the Commonwealth's Golden Crescent."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p><i>"Schedule at least one NEC FUTURE Public Hearing in Hampton Roads at the terminus of the Chesapeake Bay Urban Crescent..."</i></p>	<p>Public meetings will be held in the NEC FUTURE program Study Area, which extends from the metropolitan areas of Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA. However, the FRA will use alternative venues, such as webinars, to extend the reach of who might participate. Public meetings relating to the program will be open to any member of the public, whether within or outside of the Study Area. All input received will be considered.</p>

Outside of Scope

Some comments were received that will not be addressed in the NEC FUTURE Tie 1 EIS. For example, comments regarding Amtrak’s existing services or other aspects of a specific railroad’s operations are beyond the scope of the NEC FUTURE program. As appropriate, the FRA will forward those comments to the appropriate entity.

The following are representative of comments received during the scoping period which are outside the scope of work for this program.

Table 11: Outside of Scope Comments and Responses		
Outside of Scope Themes	Representative Comments	Response
Legislative Definition of the Northeast Corridor	“Amend Title 49, section 24102, part 6 of the United States Code to add Virginia as part of the Northeast Corridor.”	By legislative definition USC, Title 49, Section 24102, Part 6, the Northeast Corridor includes “Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.” This definition does not preclude the FRA from considering markets or services in Virginia, or any other jurisdiction outside the legal definition of the Northeast Corridor, in the alternatives development process.
Amtrak: Service, Projects and Planning Efforts	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p>“Update the 2012 Amtrak NEC Update Report...”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>“In the short run there should be more trains on Amtrak with better amenities.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>“...consideration should be given to accepting pets on Amtrak trains.”</p>	The FRA will broadly consider customer amenities, but specific near-term changes to existing Amtrak services are outside the scope of this Tier 1 EIS. Comments specific to Amtrak’s existing services will be forwarded to Amtrak for their attention.
Northeast Corridor Commission	<p><i>The following representative quotes are excerpts from individual comments:</i></p> <p>“We object to the lack of any representatives of the riding public on the Northeast Corridor Commission and we call for such appointments to be made.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>“Add Virginia to the current eight states serving on the NEC Commission.”</p>	The FRA is committed to an open and transparent public involvement process and is closely coordinating with the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission) as well as many other NEC stakeholders. The membership of the NEC Commission does not impact the scope of the NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS and will not be addressed.

ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Numerous elected officials provided comments at the public meetings and through the web or via mail. The majority of these comments supported the project and raised numerous local concerns and projects. The comments below are organized geographically within the Study Area from south to north.

Malcolm Smith, State Senator 14th District, New York

“Given the urgency of these overhauls, we need improvements and plan completion to take place as efficiently as possible. Thus, it is imperative that public officials, particularly at the top, do everything in their power to expedite project delivery on the NEC. Doing this will demonstrate that the government has its act together to the region’s businesses and commuters, while providing better service and reduced congestion for the region.”

Senator Smith focused his comments on the importance of pursuing and financing an ambitious plan for the Northeast region and the importance of leadership in expediting the delivery of the project. He highlighted projects such as the Gateway Program, the Empire Corridor, access to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), and freight improvements to include in the scope of NEC FUTURE.

Toni Boucher, State Senator, Connecticut

“Safe and efficient train service is essential for the large and growing section of our population who rely on our railroads for work and travel, and a flexible, state of the art rail system is vital for ensuring future economic growth.”

Senator Boucher requested that future plans include improvements aimed at increasing rail capacity from New York to Southern Connecticut. Stamford, Greenwich to New Haven, and Norwalk to Danbury were specifically identified within the comments.

Gail Lavielle, State Representative 143rd District, Connecticut

“Our location makes Connecticut critical to the success of the Northeast Corridor Rail Plan. Connecticut can be a destination or just a place you pass through to get somewhere else, and it can offer either swift passage or a bottleneck; we have our choice.”

Representative Lavielle commented that rail is critical to New England’s economy. She advocated for fixing and upgrading the highly used New Haven Line and its branches before making new investments. She also noted that she was disappointed in the limited communication about the opportunity to comment on the project.

John Larson, US House of Representatives, Connecticut

“I support U.S. Department of Transportation’s NEC FUTURE initiative and urge incorporation of Hartford into the mainline of the Northeast Corridor.”

Representative Larson wrote to support the NEC FUTURE initiative and encouraged the development of an integrated passenger rail solution between Boston and New York City. Hartford’s local planning efforts were highlighted in his letter.

Governor Dannel Malloy, Connecticut

“The Northeast Corridor rail system to and through Connecticut is critical to the current and future economic prosperity and mobility of the state and the larger northeast region.”

Governor Malloy identified numerous items that are a priority for Connecticut. They included: the importance of serving major population and employment centers; evaluating a coastal alignment, an I-84 alignment, and an I-91 alignment when considering new alignments; continuing investment to address needs on the existing NEC and New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) lines; defining a modal analysis that considers highways and airports serving the same rail markets; and forecasting ridership by including planned growth.

Kim Rose, State Senator Connecticut

Senator Rose supports a high-speed rail system with a station in New Haven.

Massachusetts General Court, letter signed by the following:

- Senator Jamie Eldridge, Middlesex and Worcester
- Representative Sean Garballey, Twenty-third Middlesex
- Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Second Middlesex
- Representative Chris Walsh, Sixth Middlesex
- Representative Kay Kahn, Eleventh Middlesex
- Representative Lori A. Ehrlich, Eighth Essex
- Representative Frank I. Smizik, Fifteenth Norfolk
- Senator Susan C. Fargo, Third Middlesex
- Representative Ruth B. Balse, Twelfth Middlesex
- Representative Linda Campbell, Fifteenth Essex
- Representative Jerald A. Parisella, Sixth Essex
- Representative Jennifer E. Benson, Thirty-seventh Middlesex
- Representative Peter V. Kocot, First Hampshire
- Representative Carl Sciortino, Thirty-fourth Middlesex
- Representative Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. , Twenty-sixth Middlesex
- Senator Katherine Clark, Middlesex and Essex
- Representative Denise Provost, Twenty-seventh Middlesex
- Senator William N. Brownsberger, Second Suffolk and Middlesex
- Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, First Middlesex and Norfolk
- Representative Antonio F. D. Cabral, Thirteenth Bristol
- Representative Thomas P. Conroy, Thirteenth Middlesex

“Massachusetts’ economic competitiveness, business climate, and tourism industry will benefit from the construction of the North-South Rail Link.”

The above listed elected officials signed a letter as members of the Massachusetts General Court requesting that the North-South Rail Link be a key component of the FRA’s Tier 1 EIS. Economic benefits, connecting markets, and existing station capacity were cited as reasons this project should be included in NEC FUTURE.

James Eldridge, State Senator Middlesex and Worcester District Massachusetts

“I just think that it would be an incredibly powerful thing to be able to one day take the train from Union Station in Washington D.C., up to Maine, whether it was Portland or further north.”

Senator Eldridge stated his support for the North-South Rail Link. Taking the train from Washington, D.C. to Maine would be good for the economy and would add to the quality of life for local residents.

Frank Smizik, State Representative, Brookline, Massachusetts

Representative Smizik noted that he supports the North-South Rail Link. He is supportive of transit to cut back on carbon and improve air quality around Boston. He also stated that public health issues could be improved by having a train that goes straight through Boston.

IV. Agency Scoping Process and Comments

Representatives from federal, state, regional, and local agencies, rail and transit operators, and tribal governments participated in the NEC FUTURE scoping process. These agencies, organizations, and tribal governments were invited to the public scoping meetings. Agencies were also provided with a separate but concurrent opportunity to informally discuss the NEC FUTURE program and process with the FRA at a series of agency meetings.

This section summarizes the agency scoping discussions by topic from the nine agency scoping meetings and webinar. In addition, many agencies provided formal written comments or testimony at the public scoping meetings. Agencies commented on their specific regulatory responsibilities as well as issues of local or regional concern. Formal agency comments are summarized and addressed in this section.

AGENCY MEETINGS

In addition to their participation in the public scoping meetings, agencies had the opportunity to attend agency scoping meetings for the NEC FUTURE program from August 13 through 22, 2012, in each of the NEC's eight states and the District of Columbia. The purpose of these meetings was to provide information so that agencies could better prepare formal scoping comments. In addition, an agency scoping webinar was held on September 24, 2012 for those unable to attend a meeting in person.

The agency scoping meetings were held from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the locations listed in *Table 12*.

Table 12: Agency Meeting Dates and Locations		
Date	City, State	Building Location
August 13	Boston, MA	Massachusetts State Transportation Building 10 Park Plaza
August 14	New Haven, CT	Shubert Theater 247 College Street
August 15	Baltimore, MD	University of Baltimore, Thumel Conference Facilities 11 W. Mount Royal Street
August 15	Newark, NJ	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Board Room One Newark Center
August 16	New York City, NY	Moynihan Station 380 W. 33 rd Street
August 20	Philadelphia, PA	SEPTA Board Room Complex 1234 Market Street
August 20	Wilmington, DE	Carvel State Office Building 820 N. French Street
August 21	Washington, D.C.	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 777 N. Capitol Street, NE
August 22	Providence, RI	State Administration Building One Capitol Hill

Invitations were mailed to approximately 250 federal, state, regional, and local agencies, rail and transit operators, and tribal governments. A total of 194 people participated in the agency scoping process. The **Appendix** lists the invited agencies.

Table 13: Agency Scoping Quick Facts	
Total Organizations and Tribes Invited	252
Organizations and Tribes Attended	105
Persons Invited	303
Persons Attended	194

Both the in-person agency meetings and the webinar were conducted similar to public meetings, beginning with a PowerPoint presentation on the overall NEC FUTURE program. Agency representatives were encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussion throughout the meeting. Project boards provided additional information and were particularly useful during conversations between the attendees and the NEC FUTURE program team. Agencies were provided with a copy of the Scoping Package, the NEC FUTURE Newsletter, and the PowerPoint presentation. These materials were provided to facilitate communication with other agency representatives who were not in attendance and to inform agency comments. Agency meeting materials are included in the **Appendix**.

Agency Meeting Highlights

Participating agencies discussed a variety of issues at each of the individual meetings and the webinar. Highlights are provided below.

Study Area

Participating agencies raised questions regarding the development of the overall Study Area and in particular, the Study Area boundaries. The Study Area was defined by the FRA using the existing NEC, portions of connecting corridors, and the boundaries of MSAs. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on regional issues with an emphasis on enhancing connectivity.

NEPA and Related Environmental Reviews

Several participating agencies inquired about the scope and outcome of the Tier 1 EIS. The scope of the Tier 1 EIS will follow the guidance drafted by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to address a broad review of environmental issues. The Tier 1 EIS will not include site-specific detail. Individual projects identified through the Tier 1 process may require additional project-level or Tier 2 NEPA analyses. These subsequent project-level analyses would be potentially prepared by agencies or sponsors other than FRA. NEC FUTURE will address the full range of NEPA environmental factors within the Tier 1 EIS.

FRA has initiated Section 106 consultation and will continue to coordinate with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and Native American Tribal Governments, as needed. Permits are not an anticipated outcome of the Tier 1 NEPA process.

Data Sources and Forecasting Tools

Several participating agencies inquired about the process for normalizing data across such a large and diverse Study Area and about how data would be shared with the various NEC FUTURE stakeholders. The data collection effort for the NEC FUTURE program covers a variety of technical areas including, but not limited to, land use, air, water, rail alignments, rail operations, markets, and ridership. The primary sources of data are federal and state transportation and environmental agencies, passenger and freight railroads, and MPOs.

Data are being collected in a variety of formats, and the FRA is focused on minimizing the effort required from the data owners by accommodating a wide-range of native formats including spreadsheets, databases, GIS data (geo-spatial information system data), published documents, etc. As necessary, data inputs will be normalized or factored to the necessary geography or timeframes. As part of the program, the FRA will conduct traveler surveys and utilize information obtained through those surveys to calibrate and validate a new corridor-wide travel demand forecasting model.

Definition and Evaluation of Alternatives

At the agency scoping meetings, participants also engaged in discussion about the nature and scope of alternatives and how they will be developed, screened, and assessed. The Tier 1 EIS review process will consider a broad range of markets, service and user needs within the NEC. The markets will drive the definition of service alternatives and routes. Alternatives may include: enhanced commuter and intercity rail service; infrastructure improvements on the existing NEC; new service on the existing NEC; or new service in new corridors. Currently, all options are on the table with regard to the broad range of possible alternatives for the NEC FUTURE program. The NEC FUTURE program will include alternatives comprised of multiple projects and new service options which can be phased or incrementally implemented.

Funding/Financing

Participating agencies raised questions about funding sources and the role of the states and the private sector in funding improvements identified in the Service Development Plan. The FRA will focus on identifying service and infrastructure improvements required to accommodate 2040 ridership demand across the NEC. This will include developing capital and operating cost estimates to implement the improvements. However, it is not a specific objective of the Tier 1 EIS to define the sources of funding for the improvements or to allocate responsibility for providing funding. Funding and financing will be considered by the United States Department of Transportation, U.S. Congress, transit agencies, railroads and the states as improvements are planned and implemented. The NEC FUTURE Service Development Plan will identify potential options for funding and financing improvements.

Freight

Several participating agencies were interested in how the NEC FUTURE program will address freight rail issues, both in terms of accommodating future freight rail growth along the NEC and addressing segments of the NEC main line used by freight railroads. While the scope of the NEC FUTURE program does not include developing specific freight alternatives or a regional freight plan, goods movement is an important consideration in the process of developing an integrated rail solution for the NEC. The FRA has been working with the NEC freight railroads, the states, and the NEC Commission to collect data regarding freight rail growth. Several states requested that the FRA consider state and port freight plans and initiatives beyond those identified by the freight operators

themselves. Ensuring that freight rail growth is not impeded by efforts to facilitate the growth of passenger rail service is an important priority for the NEC FUTURE alternatives analysis and development process.

Local Priorities

A variety of local projects at various stages of planning, programming, and implementation were identified during the agency scoping meetings. As appropriate, they will be incorporated into the NEC FUTURE analysis both with regard to the No Action and Build alternatives. Projects that are currently the subject of separate NEPA analyses, or in the midst of a permitting process, will continue to follow their own timeline as they advance in parallel to the NEC FUTURE program. Examples of these projects include: Washington D.C. Union Station Master Plan, Connecticut movable bridges, freight connections to major ports, Susquehanna River Bridge replacement, Moynihan Station, B&P Tunnel, North-South Rail Link, etc.

Other Studies

Participating agencies noted that numerous other studies have been performed by a variety of organizations. The FRA will utilize the existing work and supplemental information developed from these other efforts to inform the definition of current and future conditions as well as the analysis of potential alternatives.

FORMAL COMMENTS BY AGENCY / ORGANIZATION

Formal comments were received from a variety of agencies and rail and transit operators. They include federal agencies, state departments of transportation, state regulatory and resource agencies, MPOs, counties, and local governments. General summaries of agency written comments are organized by federal, state and regional agencies and organized geographically from Washington, D.C. to Boston within their respective categories. Agencies outside of the Study Area are included at the end of the appropriate state and regional summaries. Responses to the comments follow the summary. Comments from counties and local governments are reflected in *Section III, Public Scoping Process and Comments*.

Federal Agencies

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

FHWA commented that they may fulfill three roles on this study: providing assurance that FHWA funded projects are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program and that they do not restrict future improvements; cooperating if there are proposed changes to the Interstates and access control; and as a potential funding source. Additionally, FHWA will be formally asking for FRA's cooperation during the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (ConnDOT) I-84 Aetna Viaduct project.

FRA Response:

The FRA will coordinate with FHWA and ConnDOT regarding the identified I-84 Aetna Viaduct project. As appropriate, it will be considered in the NEC FUTURE analysis.

Funding for operations, maintenance and modernization of the NEC will be considered in the alternatives development process.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):

NMFS focused their comments on the identification of potential adverse impacts on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Their letter provided guidance and outlined regulatory requirements in the following areas: Essential Fish Habitat; bridge/rail construction and potential impacts; EFH Assessment; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Endangered Species Act; and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

FRA Response:

The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the FRA will coordinate with NMFS to more fully understand the potential effects of project alternatives on resources under NMFS's purview. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.

US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):

Comments from the USFWS focused on project definition, Study Area, Purpose & Need and goals, Alternatives, and environmental considerations. The USFWS requested that the life of the project be defined, and that the Study Area definition be narrowed and geographically defined. The USFWS requested that the FRA consider concurrent capital improvement projects that are being undertaken to address future travel demand. They also recommended that the FRA clarify the project purpose to focus on passenger rail options, as well as adopt a goal to significantly contribute to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Northeast. The USFWS requested clarity regarding the definitions of the No Action and Build alternatives. They also recommended that the FRA identify and assess the environmental effects on various resources. Within the Tier 1 EIS, they requested that information be provided on reductions to cumulative impacts to air and water from the entire transportation industry. The USFWS recommended that FRA clarify to what degree freight rail would benefit in this process and that the FRA address energy-efficiency and sustainability models, and potential long-term energy solutions.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS Study Area includes the metropolitan areas surrounding the NEC Spine and connecting corridors between Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA. The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the FRA will coordinate with the USFWS to more fully understand the potential effects of project alternatives on resources under USFWS's purview. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.

The FRA will coordinate with agencies planning concurrent capital improvement projects. As appropriate, they will be considered in the NEC FUTURE analysis.

The FRA recognizes the importance of sustainability, energy-efficiency, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Northeast. A potential benefit of the program may result in an overall regional reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the FRA will work with the appropriate agencies to develop a methodology that is appropriate for a broad-level Tier 1 NEPA analysis to assess the effects on greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Tier 1 EIS.

The NEC FUTURE program considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. A focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities for accommodating those needs within the NEC FUTURE program.

State Agencies

Washington D.C. Historic Preservation Office (DC HPO):

“As you are aware, Union Station is the historically significant, National Register of Historic Places-listed landmark building that serves as the southern terminus of the NEC. We are currently working ... to review the Master Plan that will guide the redevelopment of Union Station and the air rights development areas to the north. At the same time, we are engaged in consultation with the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC) and others to review specific, ongoing projects within the historically significant station itself.”

DC HPO also commented that other historic railroad related resources exist along the corridor and additional survey and evaluation may be required on those cultural resources.

FRA Response:

The FRA is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. The FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning for the project progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the project team will assess the potential effects of project alternatives on these resources, including historic and potential archaeological resources, and will coordinate with DC HPO to more fully understand the potential effects of project alternatives on resources under DC HPO's purview. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT):

“This corridor is a vital component of our multimodal transportation network, connecting Maryland to the greater Northeast region through critical passenger services including intercity trains, commuter rail, and freight rail operations which serve the Eastern Shore, Port of Baltimore, and beyond.”

MDOT also noted that several major rail facilities within their state are in dire need of replacement and modernization and highlighted three projects for inclusion in the NEC FUTURE program. MARC service is expected to triple by 2035 and MDOT highlighted the importance of commuter and intercity passenger service being maintained and expanded at Baltimore Penn Station. MDOT cited freight rail as having significant economic, energy, and emissions benefits. Freight rail would benefit from an expanded operating window to access the port. Multimodal connections, particularly to Baltimore / Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), were highlighted. MDOT recommended that rail alternatives be compared to non-rail modal alternatives in the region. MDOT requested that the states be included as collaborators in the identification and prioritization of screening criteria for alternatives. States should also be accorded a prominent role in determining which projects move forward to design and construction as well as determining how projects are funded.

FRA Response:

The FRA recognizes the importance of improving safety, reliability, and redundancy. The goals of the NEC FUTURE program include identifying and developing a program that provides attractive, competitive, and high-quality passenger service.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The FRA considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities for accommodating those needs with the NEC FUTURE program.

The NEC FUTURE program Purpose & Need and goals address the mobility challenges of the Study Area in a multi-modal context, but are focused on the role of passenger rail in meeting those challenges. The FRA will consider the capacity constraints of the total transportation system (rail, highway, air) in evaluating future passenger rail needs. In this context, the NEC FUTURE program alternatives will provide options for how rail can contribute to the overall mobility of the region given the broader transportation system context. The NEC FUTURE alternatives development process will include a high-level cost-benefit analysis of alternative passenger rail investments. The NEC FUTURE Purpose & Need and goals will be refined to strengthen this focus on passenger rail.

The FRA is committed to an ongoing and open public participation process through which concepts, criteria, and alternatives will be discussed.

The FRA is committed to coordinating with States and rail providers to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources.

Maryland Department of Planning (MDP):

MDP raised questions about the alternatives and if the project was going to focus on intercity or local commuter alternatives. Both services were identified as having needs and there were also questions raised about how those needs and respective improvements would be prioritized. MDP suggested that a goal be added to address the need for supporting economic growth and development in the corridor. Additionally, alternatives screening criteria were cited as an item needing clarification to better reflect the goals including the development of an integrated passenger rail transportation solution and strengthening intermodal connections. MDP offered to share state data with the project team.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program recognizes the importance of improving safety, reliability, and redundancy. The goals of the NEC FUTURE program include identifying and developing a program that provides attractive, competitive, and high-quality passenger service. Investment in the existing NEC is a priority for the NEC FUTURE program.

The Purpose & Need for the NEC FUTURE program states that major investments in the NEC and other transportation modes are needed for the Northeast to grow and remain economically competitive in national and international markets. The FRA recognizes the role transportation and mobility play in influencing economic growth and development. The program goals identified in the Scoping Package will be refined to better articulate this relationship between mobility and economics.

The NEC FUTURE program Purpose & Need and goals address the mobility challenges of the Study Area in a multi-modal context, but are focused on the role of passenger rail in meeting those challenges. In this context, the NEC FUTURE program alternatives will provide options for how rail can contribute to the overall mobility of the region given the broader transportation system context.

State of Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT):

“The Northeast Corridor is a significant asset for the State’s multi-modal needs, serving both passenger rail for Amtrak and Southeastern Passenger Transportation Authority (SEPTA) services and providing a corridor for movement of freight goods. The State has increased rail infrastructure as part of its infrastructure priorities for the state. The State recognizes the need to upgrade the state of good repair for parts of the Corridor, provide increased access for passengers on intercity and regional rail services and improve freight movement through expansion and/or elimination of scheduling conflicts with passenger trips.”

DelDOT encouraged the FRA to consider state of good repair investments for priority funding and recommended the expansion of commuter rail into Delaware from Maryland. DelDOT also cited the need for (3) three tracks between Perryville and the Northeast rail segment and identified the need for bridge improvements across the Susquehanna River. Additional comments addressed freight, air quality, green-house gases, sea-level rise, and the potential for environmental impacts on a new alignment. DelDOT encouraged the development of high-speed rail to supplement existing intercity service and recommended that Delaware continue to be included for consideration in future rail planning.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The NEC FUTURE program recognizes the importance of sustainability, energy-efficiency, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Northeast. A potential benefit of the program may result in an overall regional reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the FRA will work with the appropriate agencies to develop a methodology that is appropriate for a broad-level Tier 1 NEPA analysis to assess the effects on greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Tier 1 EIS.

Site or location-specific decisions will be addressed in subsequent, project-level environmental reviews.

FRA will work with the appropriate agencies to develop a methodology that is appropriate for a broad-level Tier 1 NEPA analysis to assess the effects of climate change and sea-level.

State of Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC):

DNREC noted that numerous portions of the Study Area lie within Delaware’s federally approved Coastal Zone and are subject to the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act. DNREC supports the project but noted the potential for deleterious impacts to important coastal resources. The letter identified numerous laws, studies, and contact people to assist in addressing coastal issues, sea level rise, wetlands, subaqueous lands, and contaminants.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. The NEC FUTURE program will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning for the project progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the NEC FUTURE team will assess the potential effects of project alternatives on these resources. Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.

Climate change and sea-level rise will also be considered and evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS at a broad level.

NJ TRANSIT:

“We believe, along with the other NEC states, that this rail corridor is both a major existing artery sustaining our present economy and an opportunity we must take advantage of to provide needed future transportation capacity tomorrow. The critical location and function of the Northeast Corridor in New Jersey makes it the single most important railroad we use to provide our services in this state.”

NJ TRANSIT also highlighted the critical importance of achieving a State of Good Repair along the existing NEC and that the current needs not be impeded by future service improvements. Additional trans-Hudson and midtown Manhattan capacity are two areas of defined need. NJ TRANSIT recommended focusing attention on the following project attributes when evaluating alternatives: sufficient future capacity implemented to meet future demand; a feasible, efficient, and flexible rail operating plan; and addressing station capacity in midtown Manhattan and access to the street and subway system.

FRA Response:

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.

New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA):

NJDA focused their comments on the protection and preservation of farmland. Their program identifies and protects agriculture development areas. Construction or other impacts to these areas must go through a state mandated process before the land can be utilized.

FRA Response:

The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is a corridor-level analysis. More detailed alignment issues would be the subject of subsequent project-level environmental reviews.

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ):

“Ridership on the PATH system is growing, with a new car fleet and with funding for a new signal system that will bolster its peak-period capacity. PATH handles an essential share of trans-Hudson commuter demand and provides resilience and redundancy when [NJ Transit] and Amtrak services across the Hudson are disrupted.”

The PANYNJ identified the following goals for the NEC FUTURE project: supporting expanded train operations via Penn Station; incorporating Moynihan Station as an element of the NEC system; including PANYNJ/PATH transit system requirements such as rehabilitation of Dock Bridge and Newark Penn Station; expanding service to complement long term strategies addressing regional air demand; coordinating service to provide ground transportation to Newark Liberty International Airport; and accommodating increased rail freight rail service.

FRA Response:

The FRA recognizes the importance of service to markets along the existing intercity and commuter rail shoreline route. The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NY MTA):

NY MTA noted that the Scoping Package emphasized Amtrak and intercity rail issues while under emphasizing the importance of commuter service. Additional coordination with FTA in terms of decision-making and funding choices was cited as an important issue. MTA's specific comments included the following: develop a capital investment policy for the NEC; capacity improvements will require investment from commuter/regional railroads; the needs of commuter/regional railroads that merge onto the NEC must also be addressed; a State of Good Repair with high degree of reliability will be required for the “no action” alternative; maximizing the efficiency of intermodal moves and minimizing negative impacts to subway operations; Metro-North Railroad (MNR) Penn Station Access should not be part of the “no action” alternative; success will be limited by the weakest link in the system, be it infrastructure or rolling stock; requesting the list of projects on the “no action” alternative list and the Initial List of Alternatives; consideration of a “Baseline” or “Transportation System Management” type alternative; and identification of numerous items that will need to be addressed before implementation of high speed or higher speed rail.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program recognizes the importance of improving safety, reliability, and redundancy. The goals of the NEC FUTURE program include identifying and developing a

program that provides attractive, competitive, and high-quality passenger service. Investment in the existing NEC is a priority for the NEC FUTURE program.

FRA is coordinating its planning efforts as part of this program with their fellow agencies under the USDOT umbrella. This includes FTA, FHWA, and FAA.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

All comments received during scoping will be considered in the alternatives development process. This includes the development of the No Action Alternative. FRA is committed to an ongoing and open public participation process through which concepts, criteria, and alternatives will be discussed.

State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP):

DEEP stated that the economic benefits of a new alignment would need to be clearly defined along with the future demand. If a new alignment is part of the recommended alternative, DEEP will look for assurances that it will not lead to a decline in financial support or physical upkeep of the existing NEC Spine. Finally DEEP requested that the EIS evaluate the following alignment for new rail service: New Haven Line to New Haven, Springfield Line to Springfield and then the Boston and Albany line to reach Boston.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is a corridor-level analysis. More detailed alignment issues would be the subject of subsequent project-level environmental reviews.

Economic benefits will be considered in the alternatives analysis and are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program goals.

Funding for operations, maintenance, and modernization of the NEC will be considered in the alternatives development process.

State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT):

“The NEC rail system to and through Connecticut is critical to the current and future economic prosperity and mobility of Connecticut and the entire Northeast region. Connecticut has a rich commuter rail and transit network that is a key driver to our economy. Investments to achieve and maintain a state-of-good-repair for the existing NEC and the intermodal systems that connect to the NEC must be the priority, BEFORE considering future high speed corridor investments.”

ConnDOT also identified the need for immediate and compelling investments to rolling stock, support facilities, and existing infrastructure in order to address reliability, capacity, frequency, and travel time issues. ConnDOT emphasized that there will be a need for additional service along the New Haven Line, New Haven Line branch lines, and Shore Line East to address growth, population projections, and highway congestion in the next two to three years. Infrastructure and service plans

along the NHHS line and an inland route from Boston to New York were identified as priority needs. Additional issues that were highlighted included: determining an optimal balance of use for freight, achieving a state of good repair on the existing alignment, the importance of Hartford on a new alignment, forecasting ridership using a planned growth model instead of historic travel patterns, and identifying a collaborative process to set the evaluation criteria for alternatives. ConnDOT also recommended that rail alternatives be compared to non-rail modal alternatives.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The NEC FUTURE program addresses both intercity and commuter rail in the alternatives development process. Station locations will be considered in a market-based analysis. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS. Site or location-specific decisions will be addressed in subsequent, project-level environmental reviews.

The NEC FUTURE program considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the existing NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities for accommodating those needs with the NEC FUTURE program.

The FRA is committed to an open, transparent, and robust process and is committed to coordinating with states and rail providers to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources.

The NEC FUTURE Purpose & Need addresses the mobility challenges of the Northeast region in a multi-modal context, but is focused on the role of passenger rail in meeting those challenges. The FRA will consider the capacity constraints of the total transportation system (rail, highway, air) in evaluating future rail transportation needs. In this context, the NEC FUTURE program alternatives will provide options for how rail can contribute to the overall mobility of the region given the broader transportation system. The NEC FUTURE Service Development Plan and Tier 1 EIS alternatives development process will include a cost-benefit analysis of alternative passenger rail investments. The NEC FUTURE Purpose & Need will be refined to strengthen this focus on passenger rail.

State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD):

DECD highlighted three transportation projects and planning efforts that are receiving major investment within the state. These projects include the NHHS Rail Corridor, New Britain Hartford Busway, and the Connecticut Airport Authority. Within the state, DECD noted that inland routes for alternative corridors would be preferred along the I-84 and I-91 corridors with the inclusion of

Hartford as a station stop. Finally, the existing NEC was highlighted as urgently in need of infrastructure improvements to address capacity and reliability issues.

FRA Response:

FRA will coordinate with the participating states and rail providers within the NEC to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources.

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT):

“While only 50 miles in length from end to end, the NEC has shaped RI’s development patterns since it was first laid out in the 1830’s. The NEC continues to shape our development – most recently with the NEC relocation in downtown Providence in the 1980’s. This move and creation of a new station completely transformed the area of downtown Providence into a successful and thriving office and retail center.”

RIDOT comments also focused on their vision for the corridor. Their primary concerns include multi-modal connections, achievement of a State of Good Repair, a strong federal role including funding and maintenance, and that the NEC remains a public asset. Detailed comments focused on: addressing the connection to land use in the Study Area; balancing commuter and freight rail needs; expanding commuter rail services in the southern portion of the state; creating a gateway between the Providence station and downtown; maintaining existing connections; increasing capacity and expanding service to numerous stations; supporting transit oriented development; development of a maintenance/overhaul facility in the state; and focusing on a comprehensive coordinated planning effort.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program is evaluating a broad range of alternatives as well as other operational improvements that will be considered in the Service Development Plan and Tier 1 EIS. The NEC FUTURE program will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The FRA recognizes the importance of service to existing and emerging markets along the existing intercity and commuter rail routes. The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

The NEC FUTURE program considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the existing NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities for accommodating those needs with the NEC FUTURE program.

Site or location-specific decisions will be addressed in subsequent, project-level environmental reviews.

The FRA is committed to an open, transparent, and robust process. FRA will coordinate with the participating states and rail providers within the NEC to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT):

“In order for the results of the NEC FUTURE process to be relevant to the NEC states – indeed, for state-level stakeholders to embrace the outcome at all – the process must respect and incorporate current state funding priorities and planning processes. MassDOT is wary of an outcome of the NEC FUTURE process in which the federal government identifies investment priorities that it will then look to the states to fund, a nearly-impossible situation given the grim fiscal realities currently facing the transportation agencies of many of the NEC states.”

MassDOT also expressed the need for additional outreach to agencies located in the northern portions of the corridor and additional opportunities for public outreach. Upon reviewing the project timeline they noted that it did not provide sufficient time for the data collection phase. MassDOT requested more detailed information on the screening criteria, any preliminary lists of potential alternatives that may have already been developed, and clarification as to the process for identifying the preferred alternative. Additional comments included the need to identify and integrate the different alternatives and planned improvements that already exist in the corridor, including the needs and priorities of the freight rail system. MassDOT also expressed that a new dedicated high-speed corridor should serve major existing centers and stressed the importance of bringing the NEC to a state of good repair.

FRA Response:

The FRA is committed to an open, transparent, and robust process and is committed to coordinating with states and rail providers to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources.

The FRA is committed to coordinating with states and rail providers to incorporate appropriate information from a variety of sources and to completing this study on time and on budget in 3 years.

All comments received during scoping will be considered in the alternatives development process. A framework will be established for categorizing and defining these numerous ideas into a set of Initial Alternatives. Initial Alternatives will be consolidated and organized into a set of Preliminary Alternatives and then screened to a set of Reasonable Alternatives for consideration in the Tier 1 EIS. FRA is committed to an ongoing and open public participation process through which concepts, criteria, and alternatives will be discussed.

The FRA is coordinating with states and MPOs concerning relevant plans and programs.

The NEC FUTURE program will consider forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the existing NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities for accommodating those needs with the NEC FUTURE program.

The FRA recognizes the importance of service to existing and emerging markets along the existing intercity and commuter rail routes. The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT):

Two letters were received from Virginia DRPT. The Virginia Urban Crescent region was highlighted in a request to expand the Study Area. The Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor improvements currently being studied were identified for inclusion in the NEC FUTURE program. DRPT also requested that the EIS consider technologies where electric and diesel electric service is provided on the same locomotive and yard and station locomotive shuttle train operations.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Hampton Roads and Richmond, VA, and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The NEC FUTURE program's Purpose & Need and goals include evaluating alternative equipment for future rail service alternatives.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT):

NCDOT requested that the study fully consider the importance of through and connecting services to/from destinations along the SEHSR network.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Hampton Roads and Richmond, VA, and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process. Previous and ongoing studies pertaining to passenger rail service in and through Virginia will be considered in the alternatives development process.

Regional Planning Organizations

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) Washington, D.C.:

The MWCOCG sent a letter requesting the following: expand the Study Area to include Virginia's Golden Crescent; schedule outreach meetings in Virginia; and modify the United States Code to redefine the NEC to include Virginia.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Hampton Roads and Richmond, VA, and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process. Previous and ongoing studies pertaining to passenger rail service in and through Virginia will be considered in the alternatives development process.

By legislative definition USC, Title 49, Section 24102, Part 6, the Northeast Corridor includes "Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island." This definition does not preclude the FRA from considering markets or services in Virginia, or any other jurisdiction outside the legal definition of the Northeast Corridor, in the alternatives development process.

Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) Delaware:

"The NEC also serves as an economic development engine as it is the primary rail freight corridor for the entire Delmarva Peninsula. It is important to maintain this 100 year-old rail corridor while also creating the capacity to accommodate more trains and passengers in the future."

WILMAPCO identified the following initiatives and studies for inclusion in the NEC FUTURE program: Newark Regional Transportation Center; Newark Train Station Feasibility Study; expansion of MARC train service to Elkton; Chesapeake Connector Freight and Rail Passenger Benefits Study; and development of TOD in Perryville, MD.

FRA Response:

FRA is coordinating with states and MPOs concerning relevant plans and programs.

FRA will coordinate with WILMAPCO to understand the projects that were identified.

FRA will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment.

Documentation of site-specific impacts would be the subject of separate project-level studies.

Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization Pennsylvania:

The Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization commented that parking at stations needs to be improved.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program recognizes the importance of providing attractive, competitive, high-quality, and user friendly passenger rail service to customers, which is consistent with the overall NEC FUTURE program goals. Specific implementation details will be considered in subsequent project-level analyses.

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) New York:

NYMTC focused their comments on the need for supporting strengthened connections among intercity, regional, and local rail and passenger modes. They noted that increased transportation efficiency is a sustainability tool that can increase economic vitality.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

The Purpose & Need for NEC FUTURE program states that major investments in the NEC and other modes are needed for the Northeast to grow and remain economically competitive in national and international markets. The FRA recognizes the role transportation and mobility play in influencing economic growth and development. The program goals identified in the Scoping Package will be refined to better articulate this relationship between mobility and economics.

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV) Connecticut:

COGCNV supports high-speed rail along the I-84 corridor and improvements to the freight rail system within Connecticut.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

The NEC FUTURE program considers forecast growth in both passenger and freight markets in the alternatives development process. The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide.

South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRGO) Connecticut:

SCRGO comments addressed economic impacts. Economic competitiveness was cited as a factor to consider in the alternatives analysis. The alignment between New York and New Haven was identified as a priority for early investment in state of good repair and enhancement projects. Three corridors, including the existing coastal route, were identified as alignments that would provide redundancy and increased capacity. In addition, SCRGO noted the need to change policies that precluded the rail corridor from New York to New Haven from being eligible for certain federal funding sources because it is owned by the State of Connecticut.

FRA Response:

The Purpose & Need for the NEC FUTURE program states that major investments in the NEC and other modes are needed for the Northeast to grow and remain economically competitive in national and international markets. The FRA recognizes the role transportation and mobility play in influencing economic growth and development. The

program goals identified in the Scoping Package will be refined to better articulate this relationship between mobility and economics.

Improvements to the existing NEC necessary to bring the rail line to a state of good repair are consistent with the NEC FUTURE program's goals and will be considered in the alternatives development process.

The FRA recognizes the importance of service to existing and emerging markets along the existing intercity and commuter rail shoreline route. The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy.

The benefits, impacts and costs of developing collaborative relationships with other federal and state agencies will be generally considered in the alternatives development process. Possible funding mechanisms will be explored for the Preferred Investment Program.

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) Connecticut:

“As our region has much to gain from future rail investment, we offer a few comments and suggestions. To insure that this process results in the best possible plan, it is essential that existing plans be consulted and respected.”

CCRPA expressed the need to consult existing plans, including Connecticut's *Plan of Conservation and Development*, to minimize impacts on quality of life and the natural environment. CCRPA encouraged proposed new alternative alignments adhere to the existing interstate highway or the existing rail alignments in order to minimize disruptions. They are supportive of a full service stop in Hartford.

FRA Response:

The FRA will coordinate with Connecticut to incorporate appropriate information from the *Plan of Conservation and Development*.

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Connecticut:

Service along the NHHS line that could revitalize Hartford, Hartford's Union Station, and connect to Bradley International Airport is a priority of the CRCOG. CRCOG also identified the need to avoid negative impacts to existing freight rail service and to provide for future opportunities to enhance freight service. Many of their communities have focused on leveraging passenger rail investments to spur economic development through the use of transit-oriented development. Other comments included a request that there be no adverse air quality impacts or competing commitments to equipment and resources. The letter included suggestions for three potential alignments to access Hartford.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program addresses both intercity and commuter rail in the alternatives development process. Station locations will be considered in a market-based analysis.

The NEC FUTURE program will identify the physical improvements, technologies, and operating efficiencies to reliably and safely respond to 2040 demand for passenger service. This will include the analysis of on-corridor and off-corridor routes examining: network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, the environment, and economy. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.

Site or location-specific decisions will be addressed in subsequent, project-level environmental reviews.

The focus of the NEC FUTURE program is on meeting current and future passenger needs while accommodating future freight needs corridor-wide. Freight operators along the existing NEC are working with the FRA to identify their future needs and opportunities within the NEC FUTURE program.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Massachusetts:

Comments from the PVPC focused on enhanced service and facility improvements for the City of Springfield, including the planned revitalization of Springfield Union Station. Their letter was supportive of the market-based approach and encouraged the review of previous and current rail planning studies. PVPC requested a reduction in travel time and increased service between Springfield and the following cities: New Haven, New York, Washington, D.C., Albany, Worcester, and Boston. The inland route from New Haven to Boston via Springfield was identified for evaluation including a near-term phase for complete double track.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program addresses both intercity and commuter rail in the alternatives development process. This analysis will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS. It is likely to include both on-corridor and off-corridor routes.

The analysis will consider network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, environment, and economy. Station locations will be considered in a market-based analysis.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Massachusetts:

BRPC stressed the need to consider the NEC in a comprehensive manner including analysis on connecting corridors. Underutilized rail assets were identified as a resource that could accommodate passengers or freight. Sea-level rise was cited as a reason to consider an inland route and to identify existing portions of the NEC that could be at risk. Additional comments included the need to identify opportunities for regular intercity service, the request that impacts to the highway system be identified for no or various levels of improvements to the rail system, and identifying all rail discussions and plans that are under development.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program is coordinating with states and MPOs concerning relevant plans and programs, including analysis on connecting corridors and underutilized rail assets.

Both on-corridor and off-corridor alternatives for meeting future forecast commuter and intercity rail travel demand will be considered in the alternatives development process. Freight rail capacity is also a consideration.

General station locations will be evaluated as part of the NEC FUTURE SDP and Tier 1 EIS. The analysis will consider network connectivity, impacts to existing and new markets, and impacts on the region's transportation system, environment, and economy.

Development of the No Action Alternative will include discussion of highway capacity and congestion issues.

The Purpose & Need addresses the mobility challenges of the Northeast region in a multi-modal context, but is focused on the role of passenger rail in meeting those challenges. The FRA will consider the capacity constraints of the total transportation system (rail, highway, air) in evaluating future rail transportation needs. In this context, the NEC FUTURE program alternatives will provide options for how rail can contribute to the overall mobility of the region given the broader transportation system. The NEC FUTURE SDP and Tier 1 EIS alternatives development process will include a cost-benefit analysis of alternative passenger rail investments. The NEC FUTURE Purpose & Need will be refined to strengthen this focus on passenger rail.

Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization Virginia:

The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization requested that Richmond and Hampton Roads be included within the Study Area. Their letter contained numerous references to other studies evaluating this part of Virginia in conjunction with the Northeast in an effort to support their argument to expand the NEC FUTURE Study Area.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program Study Area extends from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to the Boston, MA metropolitan area. Markets and rail corridors outside or adjacent to the Study Area, such as Hampton Roads and Richmond, VA, and how they relate to or influence the NEC FUTURE program, will be considered in the alternatives development process.

Previous and ongoing studies pertaining to passenger rail service in and through Virginia will be considered in the alternatives development process.

Counties and Local Governments

Numerous counties and local governments provided comments related to a variety of concerns. Most of these comments focused on local issues, identified local projects and initiatives, or requested information and briefings. Comments were included within *Section III, Public Scoping Process and Comments*.

Passenger Rail Providers

Amtrak Comments:

“Given that all program alternatives developed through the NEC FUTURE process will be judged against their estimated ability to fulfill the Purpose and Need and achieve the Program Goals and Objectives, Amtrak believes it is vital that these statements clearly lay out the mobility and development challenges facing the Region over the decades ahead and comprehensively capture the beneficial possibilities that may stem from improved and increased rail service in the NEC.”

Amtrak provided numerous suggested improvements, additions, and clarifications to the Purpose & Need and the goals. The suggestions focused on mobility and development challenges facing the region in the upcoming decades as well as capturing benefits from improved and increased rail service. Additional topics addressed in their letter include: safety; communities and socioeconomic conditions; sustainability and land use; adaptation; market; economic growth; long-term costs; demand forecast and scenarios; capacity; network services; and participation. Based on their own studies of the corridor, they also provided a series of recommended Initial Alternatives for consideration.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE program recognizes the importance of improving safety, reliability, and redundancy. The goals of the NEC FUTURE program include identifying and developing a program that provides attractive, competitive, and high-quality passenger service. NEC FUTURE program goals will be refined to better articulate this.

The Purpose & Need for NEC FUTURE program states that major investments in the NEC and other modes are needed for the Northeast to grow and remain economically competitive in national and international markets. The FRA recognizes the role transportation and mobility play in influencing economic growth and development. The program goals identified in the Scoping Package will be refined to better articulate this relationship between mobility and economics.

The FRA will consider all alternatives presented during the NEC FUTURE scoping process. These ideas will be reflected in the alternatives development process which will be documented in the SDP and Tier 1 EIS.

The NEC FUTURE program is evaluating a variety of alternatives that will result in a preferred investment program. The NEC FUTURE program will evaluate, at a broad level, the potential benefits and adverse effects of each alternative on the built and natural environment. As planning for the project progresses and more detail on alternatives is available, the project team will assess the potential effects of project alternatives on these resources. Site or location-specific decisions will be addressed in subsequent, project-level environmental reviews.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Comments:

VRE requested that the Washington DC First Street tunnel be included within the Study Area, and that impacts on operations between Washington Union Station and Union Terminal Ivy City from rail operations on the NEC approaching Union Station should be considered. VRE also requested that electrification proposals evaluate the impacts to bi-direction non-electric rail service.

FRA Response:

The NEC FUTURE Study Area extends through Washington Union Station and the First Street tunnel to the connection with the CSX mainline in Virginia. The FRA will broadly consider the limitations and potential capacity impacts and solutions for the First Street tunnel corridor as well as ongoing planning for and impacts to Washington Union Station.

V. Next Steps

Input received during scoping will shape future stages of the NEC FUTURE program. In particular, comments received through the scoping process will be valuable in understanding the Study Area and affected environment, refining the Purpose & Need, defining program alternatives, and guiding the public and agency involvement process. The ideas, comments and concerns expressed during this process have all been considered and are a key element in moving the NEC FUTURE program forward and in the development of the Tier 1 EIS and SDP.

The comments received from federal, state, regional and local resource and regulatory agencies during scoping will be important in developing the analytical resource methodologies to assess the affected environment and environmental consequences. Where potentially significant issues related to resources have been raised, the FRA will reach out to resource specific agencies to discuss those topics more specifically so that they can be adequately addressed in the Tier 1 EIS. The FRA is committed to continuing an open dialogue with stakeholder agencies.

Scoping comments and the FRA's responses summarized in this Scoping Summary will be documented in both the SDP and Tier 1 EIS. Specific responses, however, may be refined as the study process advances and new information, insights and analyses are available. The FRA's response to comments regarding the project's Purpose & Need will be addressed, as appropriate, in the Tier 1 EIS Purpose & Need chapter. Similarly, the numerous ideas, comments and concerns with regard to alternatives will be incorporated in the alternatives development process and documented in the SDP and Alternatives Considered chapter of the Tier 1 EIS. The assessment of the Study Area and the affected environment will be provided in the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences chapter of the Tier 1 EIS.

Ideas, comments, and concerns raised during the process related to public involvement will be carefully considered to ensure the continuation of an open, transparent public dialogue. The NEC FUTURE program team will regularly update the project website (www.necfuture.com) with new information and provide the public with access to relevant project publications. Regular communications through venues such as meetings, webinars, and emails will continue throughout the project. The FRA will continue to work with specific stakeholder groups to create the right forum for their input and involvement.

The publication of the NOI and the scoping process are significant early milestones the development of the Tier 1 EIS. The next steps in the development of the NEC FUTURE Tier 1 EIS include:

- Continued development of the alternatives to be considered and evaluated in the document;
- Preparation of the Tier 1 Draft EIS; and
- Continued public and agency coordination.

Once the Tier 1 Draft EIS is completed and approved by the FRA, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in the *Federal Register* and through other media announcements. The NOA will indicate the public comment period; where copies of the document can be reviewed; how comments will be received; and the dates, times, and locations of the public hearings on the Tier 1 Draft EIS. The input received at that time will help the FRA identify a preferred investment program to be carried forward in the Tier 1 Final EIS and SDP.



NEC FUTURE

A Rail Investment Plan
for the Northeast Corridor



SCOPING SUMMARY: APPENDIX



December 2012



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

APPENDIX

NOTICE OF INTENT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXTEND THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD	2
PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION	6
AGENCY SCOPING PRESENTATION	11
PUBLIC SCOPING DISPLAY BOARDS	17
PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT CARD AND HANDOUT	36
AGENCY SCOPING INVITATIONS.....	41

NOTICE OF INTENT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXTEND THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD

The FHWA is currently developing the TNM version 3.0, with anticipated beta-testing of this version towards the end of 2012. Version 3.0 is an entirely new, state-of-the-art computer program used for predicting noise impacts in the vicinity of highways. It uses advances in personal computer hardware and software to improve upon the accuracy and ease of modeling highway noise, including the design of effective, cost-efficient highway noise barriers. This information request is to gather information from the beta-testers on their computer configurations, their experiences using the FHWA TNM and the availability of TNM files.

Respondents: Approximately 25 entities.

Frequency: Once.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: Approximately 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden

Hours: Approximately 6.25 hours.

Public Comments Invited: You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for the FHWA's performance; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burdens; (3) ways for the FHWA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized, including the use of electronic technology, without reducing the quality of the collected information. The agency will summarize and/or include your comments in the request for OMB's clearance of this information collection.

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995; 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued On: June 19, 2012.

Steven Smith,

Chief, Information Technology Division.

[FR Doc. 2012-15362 Filed 6-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast Corridor Between Washington, DC, New York, NY, and Boston, MA

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this Notice of Intent (Notice) to advise the public of the preparation of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

to evaluate potential passenger rail improvements between Washington, DC, New York City, and Boston, MA. FRA is leading the planning and environmental evaluation of the Northeast Corridor (NEC), an effort known as NEC FUTURE, in close coordination with the involved states, Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), Amtrak and other stakeholders. The purpose of the NEC FUTURE program is to define current and future markets for improved rail service and capacity on the NEC, develop an integrated passenger rail transportation solution to incrementally meet those needs, and create a regional planning framework to engage stakeholders throughout the region in the development of the program.

NEC FUTURE is being advanced consistent with the federal High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program and includes the development of a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP). A PRCIP provides the data necessary to support an FRA decision to fund and implement major investments in a passenger rail corridor. A PRCIP is comprised of two components: A Tier 1 EIS and a Service Development Plan (SDP). The Tier 1 EIS will be developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, 40 CFR part 1500 *et seq.*, and will address documentation on a broad corridor level. The SDP articulates the overall scope, alternatives, approach and business case for proposed service and improvements.

As part of the Tier 1 EIS, FRA will evaluate various passenger rail alternatives: A No Action Alternative, consisting of already planned improvements to the corridor, and Build Alternatives consisting of a full array of passenger rail alternatives which could range from operational and service enhancements to new physical improvements. FRA will consider the type, location and need for ancillary facilities for each alternative. The primary passenger rail route is the existing NEC passenger rail spine and its connecting corridors; however, in some areas, FRA may consider alternatives off of the existing NEC.

FRA is issuing this Notice to alert the public and agencies about the preparation of the Tier 1 EIS and associated SDP. To ensure that all significant issues are identified and considered, all interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed scope of environmental review, project purpose and need, alternatives to be

considered, environmental effects to be considered and evaluated, and methodologies to be used for evaluating effects.

DATES: Submit comments by Friday, September 14, 2012. See the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) for information on the scoping meeting dates.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are encouraged to comment on-line at the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com), via email at info@necfuture.com, or in person at the scoping meetings. For Further Information or Special Assistance Contact: Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Policy & Development, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590; by email at info@necfuture.com, or; through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FRA is preparing a Tier 1 EIS and SDP for the NEC FUTURE program. Together the EIS and SDP comprise a PRCIP that will define a comprehensive and integrated passenger rail network in the Northeast region, looking at a range of service types and infrastructure needs, including plans for public investment in projects that contribute towards efficient service and increased capacity for intercity and high-speed passenger rail and freight and commuter rail service. The PRCIP will provide the economic, financial, transportation and environmental analyses necessary to support an investment in improved rail service as a core component of a more integrated, efficient, safer, and higher-capacity Northeast regional transportation network.

The FRA will use a tiered environmental review process for complying with NEPA, as per the CEQ regulations, 40 CFR 1508.28, and in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, 64 FR 28454 (FRA Environmental Procedures). The Tier 1 EIS will also address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 36 CFR Part 800, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303, and other applicable Federal and state laws and regulations. The outcome of the Tier 1 EIS will be to identify markets to be served, service(s), general alignment and station locations.

The NEC FUTURE program is intended to develop a rail transportation investment program to support the Northeast region's economic competitiveness and growth potential

with energy-efficient and sustainable transportation services. For purposes of defining and analyzing transportation alternatives for NEC FUTURE, the study area has been broadly defined to encompass the region served by the NEC, plus those areas that can be reached from the NEC directly by train or via a single transfer to connecting corridors (e.g., the Empire Corridor in New York). The study area may be refined as the NEC FUTURE program progresses and off-corridor alternatives are identified.

Purpose and Need

The Northeast region is served by an extensive intermodal passenger and freight transportation system of highways, airports, ports, intercity, commuter and freight rail, and public transit systems. However, that transportation system lacks sufficient capacity or redundancy to support local and inter-regional mobility needs, resulting in major congestion and delays. Many components of the system are in a state of disrepair or, worse, have reached the point of obsolescence.

The need for the project is founded in the importance of mobility to the continued economic vitality of the Northeast region, coupled with projected population, economic and travel demand growth. Without investment, the limitations of the region's transportation network will constrain the growth, competitiveness and economic development of the region. The focus of NEC FUTURE is the rail network, an important component of the transportation network, and its role in providing and improving regional mobility.

Alternatives To Be Considered

The Tier 1 EIS will evaluate preliminary alternatives including a No Action Alternative and various Build Alternatives. The No Action Alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of all alternatives. The No Action Alternative will draw upon State Transportation Improvement Programs and existing intercity passenger, commuter and freight rail plans as well as planned highway and air network improvements. The Tier 1 EIS will develop and evaluate a range of reasonable Build Alternatives. The Build Alternatives will be developed at a corridor level and will address travel markets, services, operations, general alignments and station locations. Build Alternatives could include physical improvements to the NEC spine to increase capacity, enhance safety, modernize the infrastructure, improve reliability and reduce trip time. Other

alternatives could also be service- or operation-related that provide rail service to new markets or change existing patterns of service. In addition, there may be Build Alternatives off the existing NEC spine or its connecting corridors.

Possible Effects

FRA will evaluate direct, indirect and cumulative changes to the social, economic, and physical environment, including land use and socioeconomic conditions, ecological resources, water resources, cultural resources, hazardous contamination, transportation, air quality, noise and vibration at a level commensurate with a Tier 1 EIS. Analysis will be consistent with NEPA, CEQ regulations, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, FRA Environmental Procedures, applicable state environmental regulations, and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, along with other applicable Federal and State regulations.

Scoping Process

The FRA is inviting comments and suggestions from all interested parties regarding the scope of the Tier 1 EIS to ensure that all uses are addressed related to this proposal and that any significant impacts are identified. Please direct comments or questions concerning the proposed action and the Tier 1 EIS to the FRA at the above address. FRA will send letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments to the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, Native American tribes and to private organizations that might have previously expressed or that are known to have an interest in this proposal.

FRA is leading the outreach activities with agency and public meetings occurring in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. The meetings and other public involvement initiatives, including newsletters and outreach, will be held throughout the course of this study. Dates, times and locations for the scoping meetings and other opportunities for public participation will be announced on the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) and through mailings, notices, advertisements and press releases. In addition, the scoping meeting presentation will be available on the NEC FUTURE Web site along with a scoping package that can also be obtained upon request by contacting

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the mailing address above or electronically at info@necfuture.com.

Comments will be accepted on the scoping of the EIS in meetings, through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com) and by submitting written comments to Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the address above. The formal comment period for scoping will be open from the date of this Notice until Friday, September 14, 2012.

Issued in Washington, DC, on June 18, 2012.

John Tunna,

Director of the Office of Research and Development, Federal Railroad Administration.

[FR Doc. 2012-15241 Filed 6-21-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[DOT Docket No. NHTSA-2011-0084]

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Request for public comment on proposed collection of information.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), on June 24, 2011 (76 FR 37189) the agency published a 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** soliciting public comment on the proposed information collection abstracted below.

In further compliance with the PRA, the agency now publishes this second notice announcing the submission of its proposed collection to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and notifying the public about how to submit comments on the proposed collection to OMB during the 30-day comment period.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before July 23, 2012.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments [identified by Docket No. DOT-NHTSA-2011-0084] through one of the following methods:

- **Internet Submission:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- **Mail or Hand Delivery:** Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Elizabeth M. Murphy, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File No. SR-C2-2012-024. This file number should be included on the subject line if email is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Web site (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for Web site viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of C2. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File No. SR-C2-2012-024 and should be submitted on or before September 28, 2012.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.³¹

Kevin M. O'Neill,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2012-22059 Filed 9-6-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8011-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Railroad Administration****Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast Corridor Between Washington, DC, New York, NY, and Boston, MA**

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of intent to extend the formal comment period for scoping to October 19, 2012.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this Notice of Intent (Notice) to advise the public and Federal, state, and local agencies of the extension of the formal comment period for the NEC FUTURE program scoping process. The Notice of Intent to prepare a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential passenger rail improvements between Washington, DC, New York City, and Boston, MA was published in the **Federal Register** on June 22, 2012. The formal comment period for scoping was scheduled to close on Friday, September 14, 2012. In response to requests from the public provided in public testimony at Scoping meetings held from August 13th through August 22nd at nine different venues between Washington, DC and Boston, Massachusetts, FRA has decided to extend the formal comment period until Friday, October 19, 2012. **DATES:** Comment period extended from Friday, September 14, 2012 to Friday, October 19, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are encouraged to comment on-line at the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com), via email at info@necfuture.com, or by mail at the address below. For Further Information or Special Assistance Contact: Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Policy & Development, Mail Stop 20, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590; by email at info@necfuture.com; or through the NEC FUTURE Web site (www.necfuture.com).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: FRA is leading the planning and environmental evaluation of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) in close coordination with the involved states, Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), Amtrak, and other stakeholders. The purpose of the NEC FUTURE program is to define current and future markets for improved rail service and capacity on the NEC, develop an integrated passenger rail transportation solution to incrementally meet those needs, and create a regional planning framework to engage stakeholders throughout the region in the development of the program.

The materials that were presented at the Scoping meetings held from August 13th to August 22nd, including a narrated PowerPoint presentation and display boards, will be available on the NEC FUTURE Web site

(www.necfuture.com). To ensure that all significant issues are identified and considered, all interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed scope of environmental review, project purpose and need, alternatives to be considered, environmental effects to be considered and evaluated, and methodologies to be used for evaluating effects. Persons with limited internet access may request a hard copy of the Public Scoping meeting materials by contacting Rebecca Reyes-Alicea at the mailing address above. Please direct comments or questions concerning the proposed action and the Tier 1 EIS to the FRA at the above address.

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 31, 2012.

Paul Nissenbaum,

Associate Administrator of Rail Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration.

[FR Doc. 2012-22060 Filed 9-6-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Transit Administration****Notice of Meeting of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS)**

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.


SUMMARY: This notice announces a public meeting of the Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS). TRACS is a Federal Advisory Committee established by the Secretary of Transportation in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act to provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary and the Federal Transit Administrator on matters relating to the safety of public transportation systems.

DATES: The TRACS meeting will be held on September 20, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and September 21, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Contact Iyon Rosario (see contact information below) by September 13, 2012, if you wish to be added to the visitor's list to gain access to the Washington Navy Yard Conference Center.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Washington Navy Yard Conference Center (Navy Yard), Building 211, 1454 Parsons Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20374. Attendees who are on the visitor's/security list can access all three gates (6th St, 9th St, 11th St) by presenting a photo ID to gain entrance to the Navy Yard. The gate in closest

³¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).

PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION



NEC FUTURE
A Rail Investment Plan for the Northeast Corridor

Scoping Meeting for NEC FUTURE Tier I Environmental Impact Statement

August 2012

Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Railroad Policy and Development

NEC FUTURE

Who is Involved?

- Led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Key stakeholders:
 - › Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission
 - › Eight states and the District of Columbia
 - › Commuter authorities, Amtrak, and NEC freight operators
- Early engagement of environmental resource agencies
- You – the public and communities along the NEC

Tonight's Topics

- ✓ The Northeast Corridor
- ✓ Issues for the Future
- ✓ Study Process
- ✓ How You Can Participate

What is the Northeast Corridor?




Rail spine connecting Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

- 457 miles long
- Built 100-150 years ago
- Serves 8 states & D.C.
- Connections north, west and south


The Northeast Corridor

Who Does it Serve?

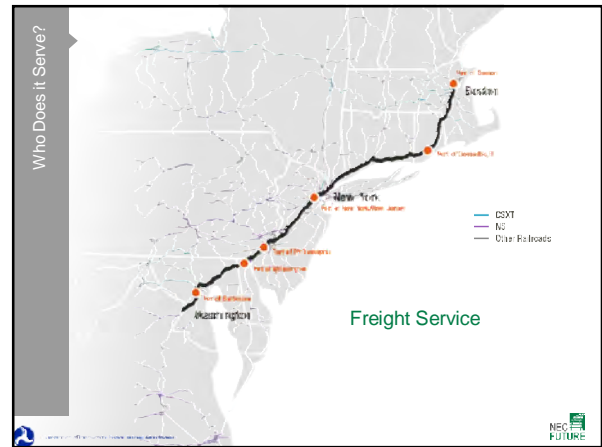
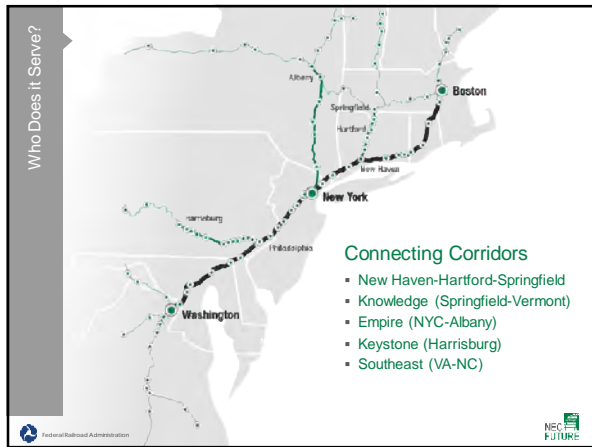
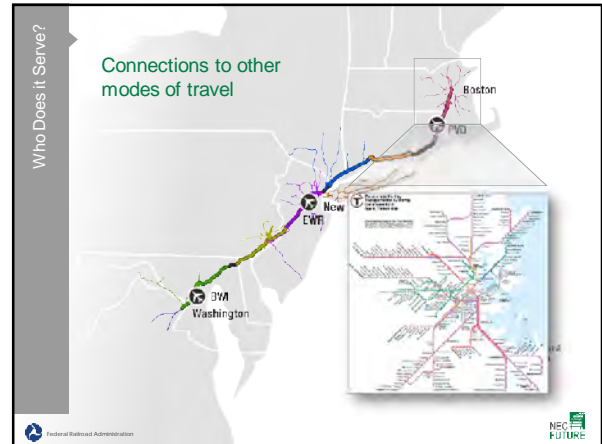
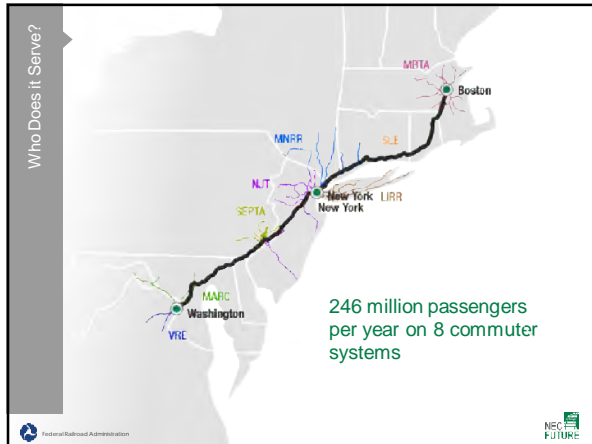
- 259 million passengers per year
 - › Amtrak passengers (Regional and Acela)
 - › Commuters and local travelers on eight systems
- 70 daily freight trains



Who Does it Serve?



13 million Amtrak passengers per year



Importance of the NEC Today

The Region Depends on the NEC Today

Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Issues for the Future

Growth Will Increase the Need for Rail Service

- Population to grow to 58 million by 2040
- Intercity trips to increase 45%
- Freight to increase

Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Issues for the Future

NEC Faces Major Challenges

- Limited track capacity
- Critical chokepoints
- Older infrastructure








Issues for the Future

Complex Choices

- How and where will the region grow?
- How can the rail system best support that growth?
- What are the highest priority investments to be made through 2040?

Issues for the Future

Key Goals

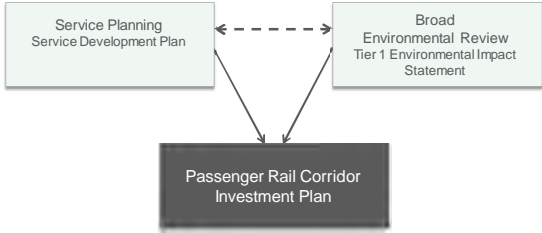


- **Integrated passenger rail solution** for the Northeast – commuter, intercity, high speed rail and freight
- **Provide high-quality rail service with capacity to meet growing demand**
- **Strengthen connections** between intercity, regional and local rail passenger and local transit modes
- **Near- and long-term solutions** to the region's mobility problems
- **Phased improvement program** that builds on existing service
- **Reduce environmental impacts and energy use** of future travel
- **Encourage private sector participation**





Study Process




Two Elements Form the Plan

Study Process

NEPA Process

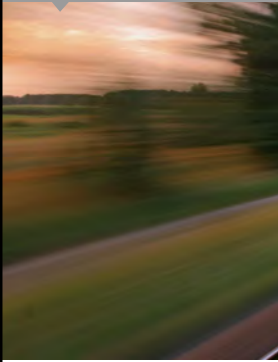


- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the FRA to consider the environmental impacts of decisions prior to taking action
 - › Tier 1 EIS will document this process
 - › Scoping is the required first step of the EIS
- FRA will follow related regulations, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Study Process

All Options Are On the Table




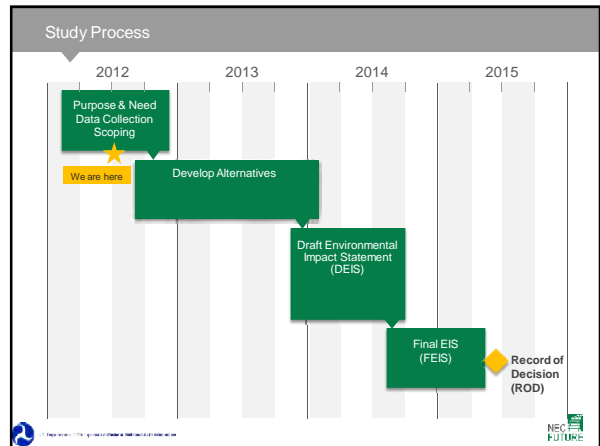
- Defines markets and service needs – **no preconceived solution**
- Considers what services are most needed and when
- Alternatives screened and evaluated to meet goals


Study Process

Defining the Scope of Study

- Purpose and Need
- Goals
- Study Area
- Potential Alternatives
- Evaluation Criteria
- Types of Environmental Impacts to be Considered








Study Process



Next Steps


- Scoping Summary
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Alternatives Development
 - › Coarse Screening
 - › Preliminary Alternatives Report



Thank You for Attending

Continue Your Participation


- Please comment - use a comment card, go online, or submit by mail through September 14, 2012
- All comments will be considered and summarized in the Scoping Summary
- Visit our website at www.necfuture.com to learn more
- Thank you!



www.necfuture.com

AGENCY SCOPING PRESENTATION



**Agency Scoping Meeting for NEC FUTURE
Tier I Environmental Impact Statement**

August 2012



Agenda



- ✓ Welcome & Introductions
- ✓ Public Scoping Presentation/Study Process
- ✓ Agency Involvement
- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Next Steps





NEC FUTURE

Who is Involved?

- Led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Key stakeholders:
 - › Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission
 - › Eight states and the District of Columbia
 - › Commuter authorities, Amtrak, and NEC freight operators
- Collaboration with U.S. Department of Transportation modal agencies – Aviation, Highway, Maritime, Transit
- Early engagement with federal and state environmental resource agencies

What is the Northeast Corridor?





Rail spine connecting Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

457 miles long

Built 100-150 years ago

Serves 8 states & D.C.




Connections north, west and south

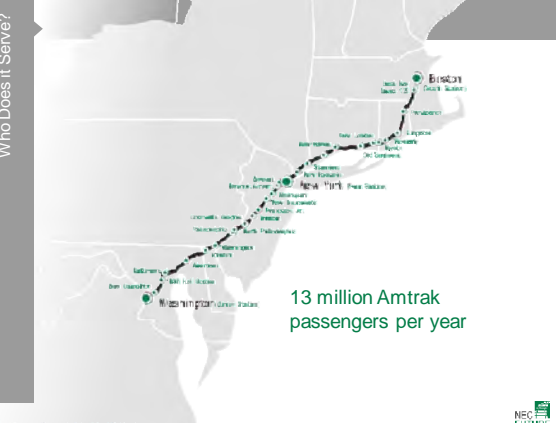
The Northeast Corridor

Who Does it Serve?



- 259 million passengers per year
 - › Amtrak passengers (Regional and Acela)
 - › Commuters and local travelers on eight systems
- 70 daily freight trains

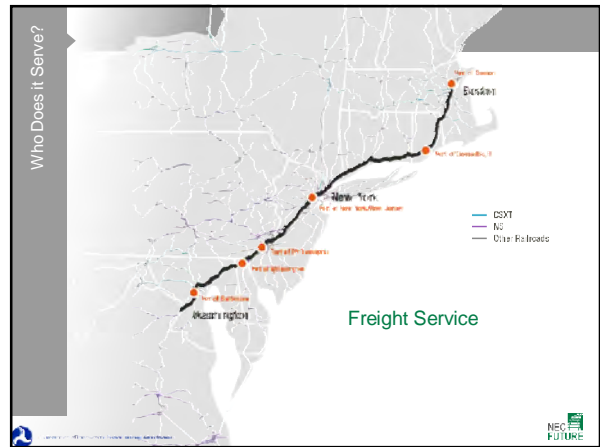
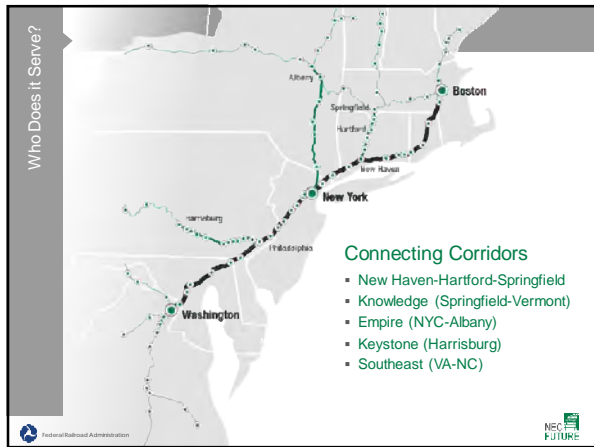
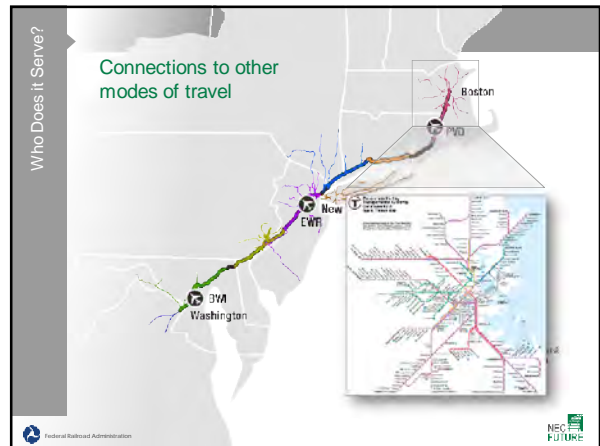
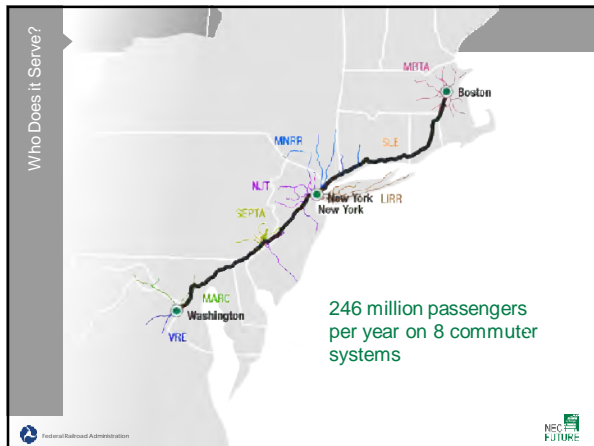




Who Does it Serve?



13 million Amtrak passengers per year



Importance of the NEC Today

The Region Depends on the NEC Today

Federal Railroad Administration

Issues for the Future

Growth Will Increase the Need for Rail Service

- Population to grow to 58 million by 2040
- Intercity trips to increase 45%
- Freight to increase

Federal Railroad Administration

Issues for the Future

NEC Faces Major Challenges

- Limited track capacity
- Critical chokepoints
- Older infrastructure




Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Issues for the Future

Complex Choices

- How and where will the region grow?
- How can the rail system best support that growth?
- What are the highest priority investments to be made through 2040?



Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Issues for the Future

Key Goals

- **Integrated passenger rail solution** for the Northeast – commuter, intercity, high speed rail and freight
- **Provide high-quality rail service with capacity to meet growing demand**
- **Strengthen connections** between intercity, regional and local rail passenger and local transit modes
- **Near- and long-term solutions** to the region's mobility problems
- **Phased improvement program** that builds on existing service
- **Reduce environmental impacts and energy use** of future travel
- **Encourage private sector participation**

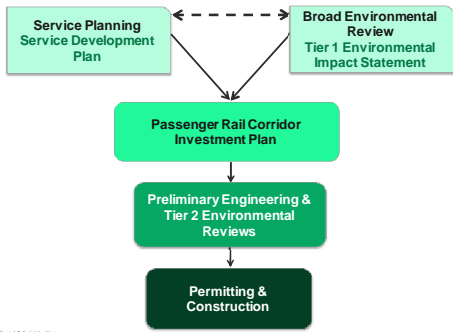


Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Study Process

Two Elements form the Plan




Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Study Process

NEPA Process

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the FRA to consider the environmental impacts of decisions prior to taking action
 - › Tier 1 EIS will document this process
 - › Scoping is the required first step of the EIS
- FRA will follow related regulations, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966




Federal Railroad Administration

NEC FUTURE

Study Process

Environmental Analysis

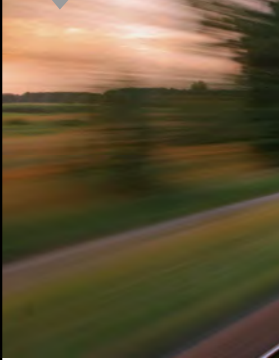
- Identification of Tier 1 Methodologies
 - Consistency across geographies
 - Approach by environmental factor
 - Ties to subsequent project-level reviews
- Coordination with federal, state resource agencies
- Extensive corridor-wide existing conditions data collection
 - GIS-focus for corridor-wide environmental review
 - State, MPO, or county level of detail



Federal Railroad Administration


NEC FUTURE

Study Process



All Options Are On the Table


- Defines markets and service needs – **no preconceived solution**
- Considers what services are most needed and when
- Alternatives screened and evaluated to meet goals



Study Process

Alternatives Evaluation

- **No Action Alternative:**
 - › Represents future NEC with only currently planned/funded improvements and no increases in capacity
- **Build Alternatives to be identified through stakeholder outreach and scoping:**
 - › Address existing NEC needs and markets
 - › Provide opportunities for growth
 - › Improve and enhance capacity, connectivity, and reliability
 - › Meet environmental and economic needs



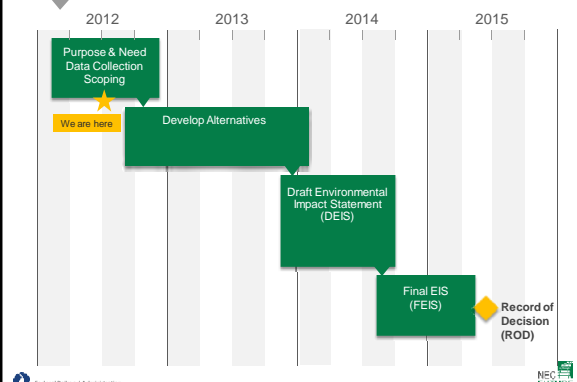

Study Process

Scoping Process

- Scoping process from June 22nd through September 14, 2012
- Scoping meetings scheduled between August 13th and 22nd at nine different venues
- Scoping notification
 - › Newspaper advertisements
 - › Email blast to mailing list
 - › Website – www.necfuture.com



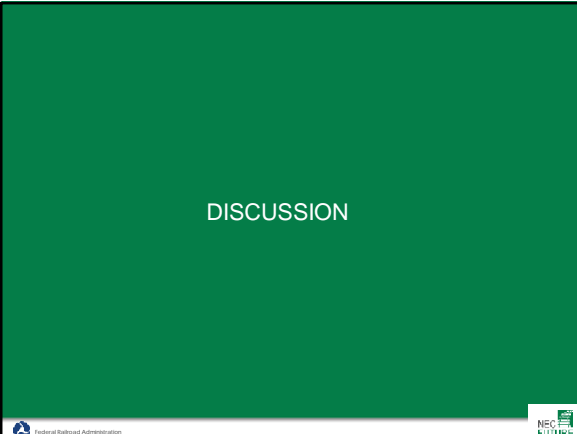




Study Process

Agency Involvement

- Agency and Public Involvement Coordination Plan
- Scoping comments through September 14, 2012
- Project updates via website at www.necfuture.com and/or email to info@necfuture.com
- Targeted webinars to solicit input
- Review of project materials at key milestones



Next Steps

- Scoping Summary
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Alternatives Development
 - › Coarse Screening
 - › Preliminary Alternatives Report

PUBLIC SCOPING DISPLAY BOARDS

Welcome to the NEC FUTURE Scoping Meetings

Tonight's Agenda

- ▶ 4:30-7:30 pm:
View Displays
 - › Introduction and study process
 - › Purpose, goals and key issues
 - › Alternatives development
 - › How to stay involved
- ▶ 5:30 pm: Presentation
- ▶ Comments
 - › Public or private comment
 - › Comment cards



What is NEC FUTURE?

NEC FUTURE is the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) comprehensive planning process for future rail investment in the Northeast Corridor (NEC), the rail spine that links Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

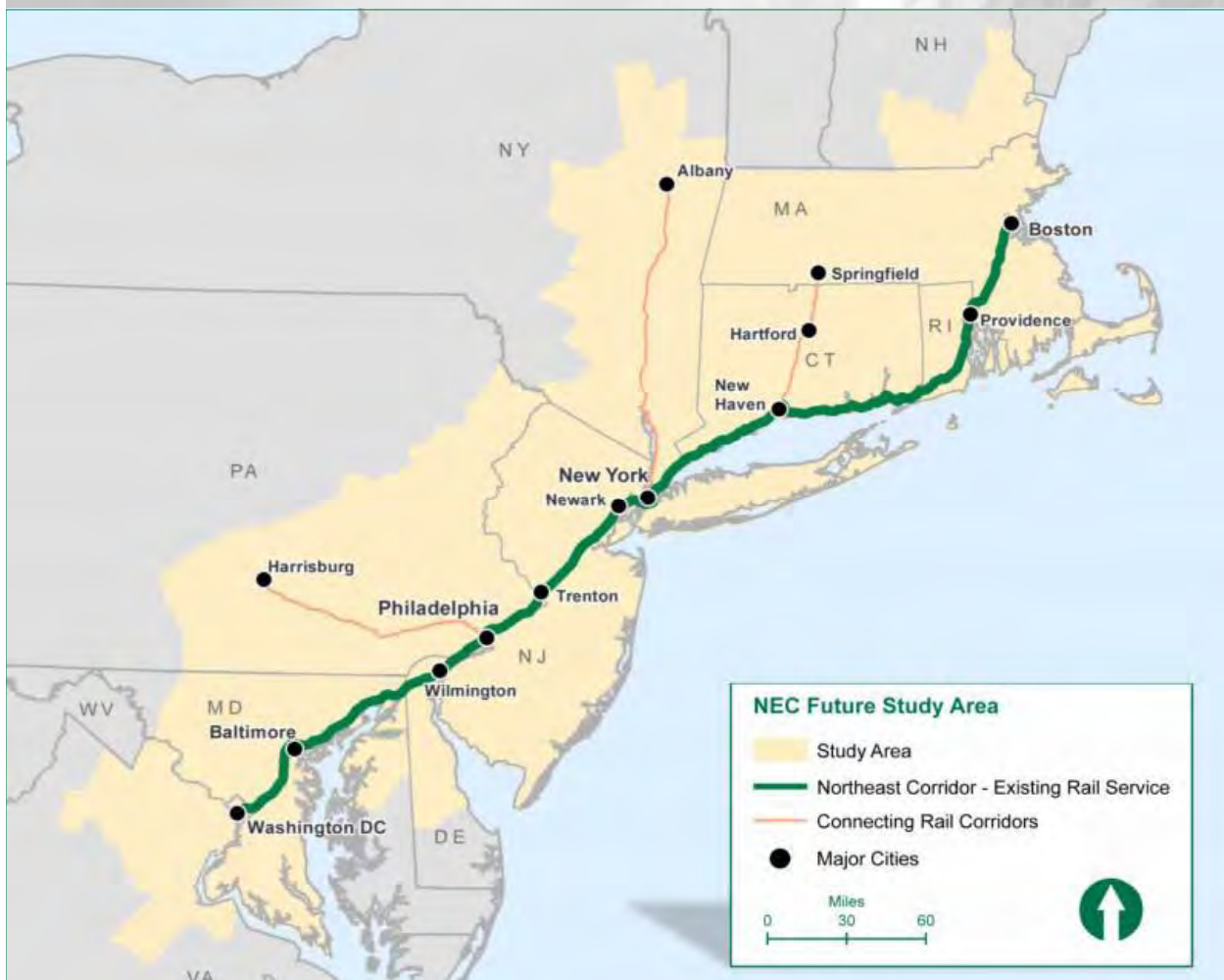
- ▶ NEC FUTURE has two major components that will identify and evaluate a full range of alternatives to improve passenger rail service in the Northeast:
 - **Service Development Plan (SDP)** - defines alternatives for rail service improvements, evaluates their impact on the existing network and operations, and assesses costs and benefits of the proposed plan.
 - **Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** - addresses the broad environmental effects of the alternatives for the entire corridor.
- ▶ These components form a **Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP)**, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The PRCIP is a foundation for future project development including engineering design, subsequent environmental reviews, environmental permitting and construction.



NEC FUTURE Study Area

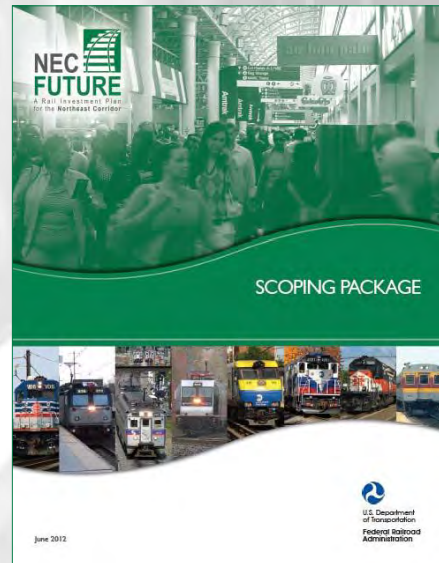
The NEC, the rail transportation spine of the Northeast region, is a key component of the region's transportation system and vital to its sustained economic growth.

Today, the 457-mile NEC – anchored by Boston's South Station in the north, New York's Pennsylvania Station in the center, and Washington's Union Station in the south – is one of the most heavily traveled rail corridors in the world.



What is Scoping?

- ▶ Scoping is an opportunity for the public to help shape the study process for NEC FUTURE
 - Feedback will help identify reasonable alternatives and potential environmental considerations
- ▶ You may wish to comment on:
 - Study purpose, need and goals
 - Key issues to be considered
 - Potential environmental impacts
 - Alternatives development process
 - Other related issues of interest to you
 - › What works well on the NEC today?
 - › What needs to be improved?



Learn more in the Scoping Package at www.necfuture.com



NEC FUTURE Process and Timeline

Spring 2012	Project Initiation	
	Initial Stakeholder Outreach	Data Collection
Summer 2012	Define Purpose and Need	
	Scoping	
Fall 2012 – Winter 2014	Alternatives Development	
Winter 2013 – Summer 2014	Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement Draft Service Development Plan	
Fall 2014 – Spring 2015	Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement Final Service Development Plan Record of Decision	



NEPA Environmental Review Process

- ▶ The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their decisions prior to taking any action
 - Environmental review incorporates compliance with other federal laws, including Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act
- ▶ The key principles of environmental impact assessment are:
 - Full and open disclosure of environmental consequences
 - Interdisciplinary approach
 - Objective consideration of all reasonable alternatives
 - Focus on key issues
 - Measures to avoid or minimize adverse impacts
 - Consultation and coordination among agencies
 - Encouragement of public participation



- ▶ What Types of impacts may be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS?
 - Transportation effects
 - Air quality, noise, and vibration
 - Energy
 - Land use
 - Communities and socioeconomic conditions
 - Open space, parklands and farmlands
 - Visual and aesthetic effects
 - Contamination and hazardous materials
 - Cultural resources
 - Water and geologic resources
 - Protected species and critical habitats
 - Secondary and cumulative effects



Tier 1 Environmental Review Process

The FRA is complying with NEPA for the NEC FUTURE program by preparing a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

- ▶ A Tiered Approach was selected for NEC FUTURE due to the scope, complexity and long-term nature of this multi-state planning effort
- ▶ A Tier 1 EIS provides a broad evaluation of large-scale programs

Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ General (Planning-Level): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service types ▪ Alignments ▪ Stations
Engineering	▶ Very Conceptual
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Broad ▶ GIS-Based mapping ▶ Relies heavily on readily available information
Permits	▶ Identify likely permits and requirements
Environmental Finding	▶ Results in “Finding” for the Preferred Alternative, in this case the selected Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP)

- ▶ The outcome of the Tier 1 EIS will be the selection of a Preferred Alternative consisting of a program of investments for the NEC



Tier 1 Environmental Review Process

Preparation of the Tier 1 DEIS

The Tier 1 Draft EIS will contain the following elements:

- Project Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Considered
- Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences
- Potential Measures to Minimize or Mitigate Impacts

Circulation of the Tier 1 DEIS

The Tier 1 Draft EIS will be circulated for public and agency comment.

Selection of a Preferred Alternative*

The FRA will review all comments and select the Preferred Alternative* based on the Tier 1 Draft EIS analysis and public input.

Preparation and Circulation of the Tier 1 FEIS

The Tier 1 Final EIS will present an evaluation of the Preferred Alternative* and include the FRA's response to comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

Preparation of the ROD

After public review of the Tier 1 Final EIS, the FRA will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD) that documents:

- Selection of the Preferred Alternative*
- Mitigation strategies
- Project commitments to be carried out in subsequent environmental reviews



* The Preferred Alternative will consist of a program of investments for the NEC



What is Section 106 Review?

- ▶ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires the FRA to consider the potential impact of the NEC FUTURE investment program on historic properties

- ▶ NEC FUTURE is following a phased approach to Section 106 consultation, concurrent with the Tier 1 EIS
 - Initiation of Section 106 consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) across the eight states and the District of Columbia along the NEC
 - Provide Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment
 - Framework for initiating Section 106 consultation in Tier 1 and completing Section 106 consultation at the project level

- ▶ The Section 106 review includes:
 - Identification of important historic, architectural and archaeological resources
 - Evaluation of significance for the National Register of Historic Places
 - Evaluation of potential impacts
 - Development of measures to avoid and minimize harm to historic properties
 - Extensive consultation with the public, interested organizations, and corridor-wide SHPOs/THPOs



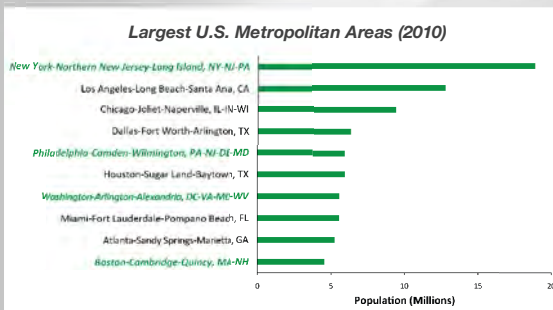
What is the Need for NEC FUTURE?

- ▶ The Northeast faces serious mobility challenges
- ▶ NEC is an economic anchor for the Nation
- ▶ NEC FUTURE is part of a comprehensive transportation solution

The Northeast Region is growing...

From 2010 to 2040...

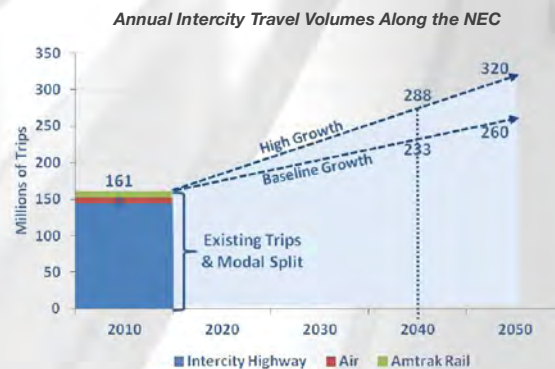
- › Population **+13%**
- › Employment **+23%**
- › Most growth in Northeast is concentrated in the four largest urban areas (among 10 largest US cities).



Intercity Travel Demand is also growing...

From 2010 to 2040...

- › Total intercity trips **+45%**
- › Future mode share shaped by transportation investment decisions



Growth affects all modes of travel

From 2010 to 2040...

- › Air passenger demand **+122%**
- › Highway congestion – worsening metropolitan areas congestion
- › Freight demand **+34%**

Annual Boardings for "Core Airports" in the NEC (000s)

Airport	2010	2040	Growth
JFK	22,395	64,707	189%
Newark	16,498	34,281	108%
Philadelphia	14,827	30,972	109%
Boston	13,234	24,264	83%
LaGuardia	11,801	16,508	40%
Dulles	11,160	35,676	220%
BWI	10,611	23,321	120%
Reagan National	8,536	11,934	40%
Total Boardings	109,062	241,663	122%



What is the Need for NEC FUTURE?

- ▶ Limited capacity constrains growth
- ▶ Critical chokepoints
- ▶ Aging and obsolete infrastructure



What is the Need for NEC FUTURE? Why invest in rail?

Transportation networks in the Northeast are constrained and all intercity modes face challenges to meet even existing travel demand.



NEC Rail Network: Aging infrastructure, limited track capacity, critical chokepoints.



Aviation Network: Congestion at regional airports



Highway Network: Aging infrastructure and heavily congested roadways.

Repairing and upgrading the NEC network will improve reliability and performance and set the stage for future growth

- ▶ NEC repairs & upgrades needed to address long-standing problems
- ▶ Further rail investments needed to meet growing travel demand.
- ▶ Rail can play greater role in meeting future intercity travel demand in Northeast



An investment in rail is part of an overall transportation solution to promote sustainability and economic growth in the Northeast region



NEC FUTURE Goals and Objectives

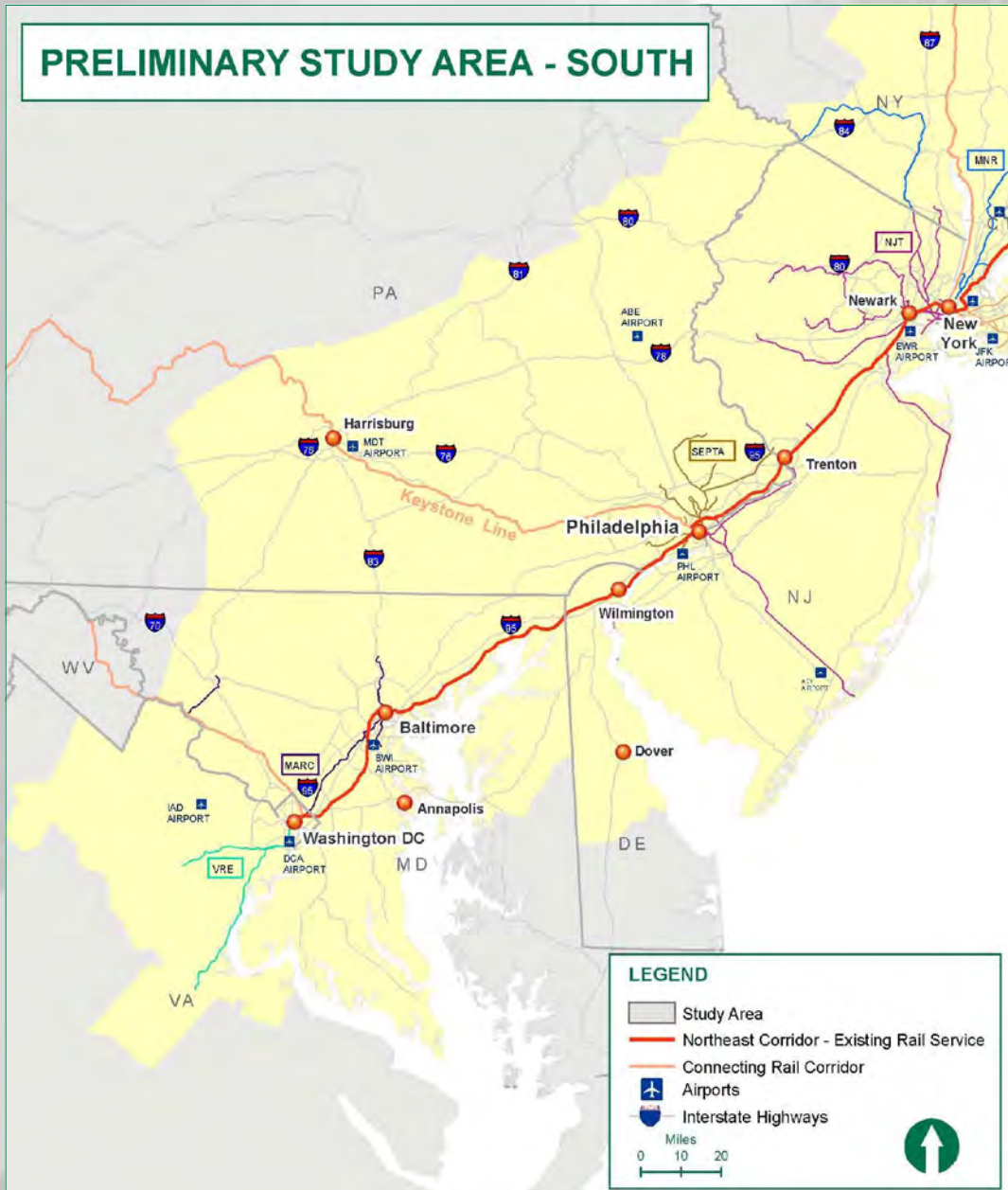
- ▶ Develop an integrated passenger rail solution that complements investments in the region's other modes
- ▶ Provide attractive, high-quality passenger rail service with:
 - › Capacity to meet growing demand
 - › Improved connectivity (better timed connections, and access to other modes)
 - › Competitive travel times
 - › Highly reliable and user-friendly service
 - › Safe and secure travel
 - › Convenient service at competitive cost
 - › Strengthen connections among intercity, regional and local rail passenger and local transit modes.
- ▶ Provide near- and long-term solutions for identified Northeast passenger travel markets
- ▶ Support plans to meet future freight rail demand
- ▶ Reflect funding and financial limits and challenges of upgrading NEC under full operation
- ▶ Reduce environmental impacts and energy use due to projected travel demand growth
- ▶ Encourage private sector involvement in future corridor improvements and operations



What key issues should NEC FUTURE address in this region?



What key issues should NEC FUTURE address in this region?



Alternatives Development

▶ Initial list of alternatives will be based on:

- Markets - Geography
- Travel Market Size - Existing and Future
- Service
- Infrastructure

▶ Many types of rail service:

Intercity Rail – Limited-stop passenger service focused on providing connections to multiple cities along a route. Top speed ranges from 79 to 125 mph. Amtrak operates intercity service across the NEC and along connecting corridors to the north, west and south of the NEC.

High Speed Rail – Limited-stop intercity passenger service focused on the fastest trip time between major urban centers. Top speed ranges from 125 to 225 mph. Amtrak's Acela trains operate between Washington and Boston at speeds up to 150 mph.

Commuter Rail – Local passenger rail service between a major urban center and the communities around it, serving daily passengers commuting to work. There are eight commuter rail services operating on portions of the NEC. Service is most frequent during the peak morning and evening hours.

Freight Service – Non-passenger trains serving individual businesses and/or providing through service to major ports and yards. Freight trains in the Northeast haul coal, agricultural products, finished products, automobiles and containers. Five major railroads operate along the NEC.

Alternatives Development

NEC FUTURE alternatives identified during scoping will be evaluated in a multi-step screening process. Alternatives development and screening (SDP) will advance in parallel with the environmental review process (Tier 1 EIS). Stakeholders, interested parties and the public will have opportunities to review and comment on the process and its findings. The outcome will be a preferred program of investments for the NEC.



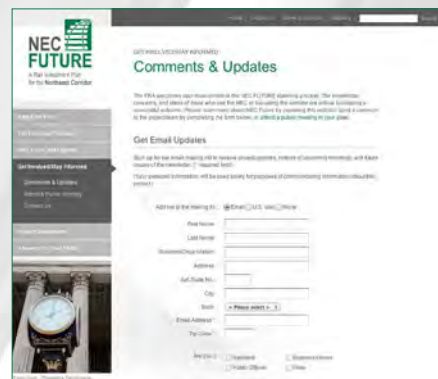
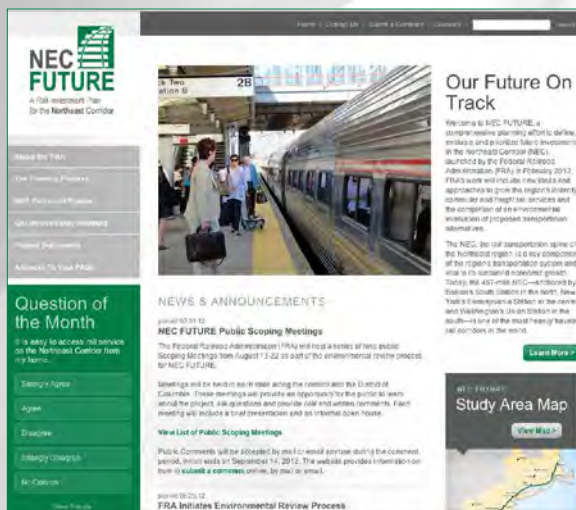
Stay Involved - Thank You!

Next Steps

- ▶ All comments will be reviewed and summarized in a Scoping Summary to be posted on the project website
- ▶ Further opportunity for participation and comment during the development of the Tier 1 Draft EIS

What you can do

- ▶ Attend and participate in our meetings
- ▶ Visit our website at www.necfuture.com
- ▶ Sign up for email updates
- ▶ Submit a question or comment by Sept. 14



PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT CARD AND HANDOUT

Comment Card

The Federal Railroad Administration is interested in your comments on NEC FUTURE.

Please fill out this comment card tonight and place it in the comment box, or send it to the address below. You can also submit comments on the project website at www.necfuture.com or via email to info@necfuture.com.



Place first class stamp here

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Railroad Policy & Development
Mail Stop 20
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20590



U.S. Department of Transportation **Federal Railroad Administration**

Comment Card

www.necfuture.com

Comment: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Check to be added to project email list

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS TODAY
OR FOLD IN HALF AND MAIL BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2012





PROJECT OVERVIEW **AUGUST 2012**

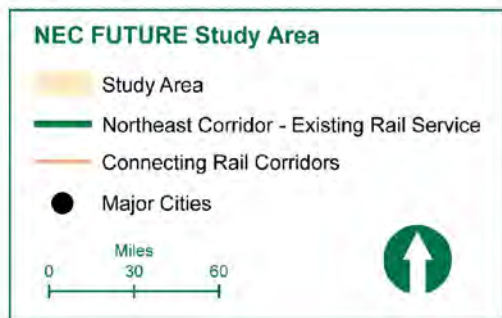
A Rail Investment Plan for the Northeast Corridor

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently launched NEC FUTURE, a unique planning process for the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC, the rail transportation spine which runs from Boston to Washington, D.C., accommodates over 2,000 passenger trains each day – including Amtrak and commuter rail services – along with 70 freight trains daily. The NEC is a critical part of the transportation system in the northeastern United States, a region encompassing eight states and the District of Columbia, and is home to one in six Americans. Yet today the NEC faces serious problems, with century-old infrastructure, outdated technology, and inadequate capacity to meet today’s travel demand or to expand travel options as the region grows. With similar capacity issues on the region’s highways, and some of the most congested airports in the nation, the Northeast faces mobility challenges that could have serious economic repercussions for the region and the nation as a whole.

Responding to these pressing issues, the FRA has initiated a comprehensive planning process for future rail investment in the corridor through 2040. The NEC FUTURE program includes both a service development plan (SDP) and a broad environmental analysis (known as a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS). These studies will help provide a roadmap to a better transportation solution for the Northeast.



Over 2,000 passenger trains operate along the 457-mile corridor each day. The NEC is a vital part of the region’s economy; the northeastern region accounts for one of every five dollars of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the nation.



Project Purpose

The purpose of NEC FUTURE is to develop an integrated passenger rail solution for the Northeast that improves mobility, meets current and future needs, supports economic development, reduces growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contributes to improved land utilization and investment in the region's communities.

While the technical work is in an early stage, potential recommendations could include strategies such as:

- Physical improvements to expand capacity, improve reliability and reduce travel times
- Enhanced access to the NEC from off-corridor locations
- Efficiency improvements and investments to relieve key bottlenecks, and
- Intercity rail service options on existing and new alignments.

The NEC FUTURE program will serve as a framework for evaluating and prioritizing specific improvements. More information on the purpose, goals and planning process can be found in the project Scoping Package, available at www.necfuture.com.

A Phased Approach

A phased approach has been established for the 38-month project. The first phase runs through February 2013. It includes data collection and analysis, ridership forecasts, and a scoping process in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Preliminary alternatives will also be identified and screened for further analysis in Phase 2. The overall project is scheduled for completion in spring 2015.

Phase 1 Schedule

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED DATE
Data Collection & Validation	March – August 2012
Agency Coordination	March 2012 – February 2013
Tier I EIS Notice of Intent	June 22, 2012
Tier I EIS Scoping Period	June 22, 2012 – September 14, 2012
Preliminary Alternatives Report	January 2013

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The planning process is engaging stakeholders and the public in defining the issues to be studied and considering alternatives that can best address them. Please visit the project website, www.necfuture.com, to learn more. Comments may be submitted via the website or at info@necfuture.com. Public and agency scoping meetings will be held in August in each of the corridor's eight states and in the District of Columbia (see the website for details). During the planning process the FRA is working closely with the NEC Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission, which includes representatives from Amtrak, the U.S. Department of Transportation, corridor states and the District of Columbia. The NEC FUTURE program will also promote early collaboration with federal and state environmental agencies for efficient decision-making.



Photo courtesy of Amtrak

The Niantic River Bridge replacement in Connecticut is one of many improvements underway along the NEC. The NEC FUTURE program will define additional improvements to enhance service and capacity on the corridor.

AGENCY SCOPING INVITATIONS

The following organizations were invited to participate in the Scoping process. Two examples of invitations relayed to state and federal agencies follow.

Organization
Aberdeen
Adams Rural Transportation Study
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Amtrak
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Berks County Planning Commission
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Boston Region MPO/Central Transportation Planning Staff
Cape Cod Commission
Capital District Transportation Authority
Capital District Transportation Committee
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
City of Baltimore
Baltimore City Department of Planning
Baltimore City Department of Transportation
City of Boston
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston Redevelopment Authority
City of Boston - Department of Neighborhood Development
City of Boston - Office of Jobs and Community Services
City of Boston - Transportation Department
City of Bridgeport
City of Danbury
City of Hartford
City of New Haven
City of New Haven - City Plan Department
City of New Haven - Office of Economic Development
City of New Haven - Transportation, Traffic & Parking
City of New London
City of New Rochelle
City of New York
New York City Department of Environmental Protection
New York City Department of Transportation
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
New York City Planning Commission
City of Newark

Organization

City of Newark - Department of Economic and Housing Development

City of Philadelphia

City of Philadelphia - Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Philadelphia Department of Commerce

Philadelphia Historical Commission

Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority

City of Providence

City of Providence - Economic Development

City of Providence - Planning and Development

City of Springfield

City of Stamford

City of Trenton

City of Waterbury

City of Wilmington

City of Wilmington - Department of Planning and Development

City of Wilmington - Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development - Historic Preservation and Museum Division

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Connecticut Department of Public Health

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

CT Transit

Delaware Department of Agriculture

Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security

Delaware Department of Transportation

Delaware Department of Transportation - Delaware Transit Corporation

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Delaware Economic Development Office

Delaware Geological Survey, University of Delaware

Delaware River & Bay Authority

Delaware River Basin Commission

Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Organization

Diamond State Port Corporation (Port of Wilmington)

District of Columbia

District Department of the Environment

District Department of Transportation

District Department of Housing and Community Development

District Department of Parks and Recreation

District of Columbia - Office of Planning

District of Columbia - Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development

District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office

District of Columbia - Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Empire State Development

Federal Aviation Administration

Federal Aviation Administration - Eastern Region

Federal Aviation Administration - New England Region

Federal Emergency Management Agency - Region 1

Federal Emergency Management Agency - Region 2

Federal Emergency Management Agency - Region 3

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Highway Administration - Connecticut Division

Federal Highway Administration - DelMar Division, Baltimore Office

Federal Highway Administration - DelMar Division, Dover Office

Federal Highway Administration - District of Columbia Division

Federal Highway Administration - Massachusetts Division

Federal Highway Administration - New Hampshire Division

Federal Highway Administration - New Jersey Division

Federal Highway Administration - New York Division

Federal Highway Administration - Pennsylvania Division

Federal Highway Administration - Rhode Island Division

Federal Highway Administration - Vermont Division

Federal Highway Administration - Virginia Division

Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration - Region 1 Office

Federal Transit Administration - Region 2 Office

Federal Transit Administration - Region 3 Office

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Greater Bridgeport Regional Council

Greater Bridgeport Transit

Harford Transit

Organization

Harrisburg Area Transportation Study / Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials

Howard Transit

Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee

Lebanon County Planning Organization

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials

Long Island Rail Road

Maine Department of Transportation

Maritime Administration

Maritime Administration - Mid-Atlantic Gateway Office

Maritime Administration - North Atlantic Gateway Office

Martha's Vineyard Commission

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Maryland Department of Planning

Maryland Department of the Environment

Maryland Department of Transportation

Maryland Department of Transportation - Maryland Aviation Administration

Maryland Department of Transportation - Maryland Port Administration

Maryland Department of Transportation - State Highway Administration

Maryland Department of Transportation - Maryland Transit Administration

Maryland Emergency Management Agency

Maryland Historic Trust

Maryland Public Service Commission

Maryland Transportation Authority

Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Company

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Massachusetts Historical Commission

MassPort (Port of Boston)

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Metro-North Railroad

Organization

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metropolitan Transportation Authority - Bridges and Tunnels

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Midstate Regional Planning Agency

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

Moynihan Station Development Corporation

Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission

National Capital Planning Commission

National Park Service - Headquarters

National Park Service - National Capital Region

National Park Service - Northeast Region

New Carrollton

New Castle County

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

New Haven Port Authority

New Jersey Department of Agriculture

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection - Historic Preservation

New Jersey Department of Transportation

New Jersey Economic Development Authority

New Jersey Meadowlands Commission

New Jersey Office for Planning Advocacy

New Jersey Turnpike Authority

New York City Economic Development Corporation

New York City Transit

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council

New York State Bridge Authority

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

New York State Department of Transportation

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Division for Historic Preservation

New York State Thruway Authority

NJ TRANSIT

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - Annapolis Field Office

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - Gloucester Field Office

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - Northeast Regional Office

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - Sandy Hook Field Office

North Carolina Department of Transportation

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

Organization

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments

Norwalk Transit District

NY/NJ Baykeeper

Old Colony Planning Council

Old Saybrook

Orange County Transportation Council

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission - Bureau for Historic Preservation

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

Philadelphia Regional Port Authority

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey - Trans-Hudson

Port Authority Transit Corp - Delaware River Port Authority

Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council

Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation

Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission

Shoreline East

South Central Regional Council of Governments

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

South Western Regional Planning Agency

Southeast Area Transit District

Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

Organization

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

Stonington

Town of Groton

Town of South Kingstown

Ulster County Transportation Council

US Army Corps of Engineers - Headquarters

US Army Corps of Engineers - North Atlantic Division

US Coast Guard

US Coast Guard - District 1 Bridge Program

US Coast Guard - District 5 Bridge Program

US Coast Guard - Headquarters Bridge Program

US Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

US Department of the Interior - Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance - Headquarters

US Department of the Interior , Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance - Boston Region

US Environmental Protection Agency - Headquarters

US Environmental Protection Agency - Region 1

US Environmental Protection Agency - Region 2

US Environmental Protection Agency - Region 3

US Fish & Wildlife Service

US Fish & Wildlife Service - Chesapeake Bay Field Office

US Fish & Wildlife Service - Long Island Field Office

US Fish & Wildlife Service - New Jersey Field Office

US Fish & Wildlife Service - Pennsylvania Field Office

US Fish and Wildlife Service - New England Field Office

Valley Council of Governments

Vermont Agency of Transportation

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Virginia Department of Transportation

Virginia Railway Express

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Westerly

Westwood

Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Windham Region Council of Governments

Woodbridge Township

York Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The following Tribal governments were invited to participate in the Scoping process.

Tribe
Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
Cayuga Nation of New York
Delaware Nation
Delaware Tribe
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island
Oneida Nation of New York
Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
Onondaga Nation of New York
Seneca Nation of New York
Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
Shawnee Tribe
Shinnecock Indian Nation
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
Stockbridge Munsee Community, Wisconsin
Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut
Towanda Band of Seneca Indians of New York
Tuscarora Nation of New York
Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) of Massachusetts



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**



1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, D.C. 20590

July 30, 2012

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
US Environmental Protection Agency - Region 1
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: FRA's NEC FUTURE program Tier 1 EIS Agency Scoping Meetings

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently initiated NEC FUTURE, a unique planning process for the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC, the rail transportation spine of the Northeast, is a critical part of the transportation system in the Northeastern United States. It faces serious problems, with century-old infrastructure, outdated technology, and inadequate capacity to meet today's travel demand. As the region grows, its ability to meet future demands will continue to deteriorate unless significant improvements are made. With similar capacity constraints on the region's highways, and some of the most congested airports in the nation, the Northeast faces mobility challenges that could have serious economic repercussions for the region, and the nation.

Responding to these challenges, the FRA has initiated a comprehensive planning process for future rail investment in the corridor through 2040. The NEC FUTURE program includes the development of a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), which is comprised of both a service development plan (SDP) and a broad environmental analysis, or a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, will present the results of a broad examination of environmental impacts associated with the proposed service and service alternatives. The purpose of this solution is to improve mobility, effectively serve travel demand due to population and jobs growth, support economic development, reduce growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contribute to improved land utilization and investment in both urban and non-urban communities in the region.

As the lead Federal agency, the FRA will be conducting a series of public and agency scoping meetings in August in each of the corridor's eight states and the District of Columbia. The FRA would like to extend an invitation to you to attend an Agency Scoping Meeting of your choosing. The Agency Scoping Meetings will be held **from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** on the following dates and at the listed locations:

Monday, August 13 - Boston, MA

Massachusetts State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Conference Rooms 1, 2 and 3
Boston, MA

Tuesday, August 14 - New Haven, CT

Shubert Theater
247 College Street
New Haven, CT

Wednesday, August 15 - Newark, NJ

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
One Newark Center, 17th Floor
Newark, NJ

Wednesday, August 15 - Baltimore, MD

University of Baltimore, Thumel Conference Facilities
11 W. Mount Royal Street
Baltimore, MD

Thursday, August 16 - New York City, NY

Farley Post Office / Moynihan Station
380 W. 33rd Street, Room 4500
New York, NY

Monday, August 20 - Philadelphia, PA

SEPTA Board Room Complex
1234 Market Street, Mezzanine Level
Philadelphia, PA

Monday, August 20 - Wilmington, DE

Carvel State Office Building
820 N. French Street
Wilmington, DE

Tuesday, August 21 - Washington, DC

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 N. Capitol St., NE
Washington DC

Wednesday, August 22 - Providence, RI

Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI

You are also invited to participate in the Public Scoping Meetings to be held on the same date and in the same location from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Public Scoping Meetings will be an open house format with a presentation by the FRA at 5:30 p.m. Additional information about the nine Public Scoping Meetings, including dates, times, locations and directions, is available on the website, www.necfuture.com.

We hope that you, or your designated alternate, will be able to participate in this Agency Scoping process to ensure that your office's mission, expertise, and priorities are reflected in FRA's planning process. We would appreciate your agency's attendance at a Scoping meeting.

Please let us know if you can attend one of the above Agency Scoping Meetings, or if you would like to send an alternate to attend. **To confirm your participation, please contact the NEC FUTURE team via email at info@necfuture.com by August 9th. Please indicate which Scoping Meeting you plan to attend.**

More information about the project is available on the website, www.necfuture.com. It is possible to comment through the website as well. The scoping comment period will extend until September 14th.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
NEC Project Manager
USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**



1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, D.C. 20590

July 27, 2012

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Maryland Department of the Environment
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: FRA's NEC FUTURE program Tier 1 EIS Agency Scoping Meetings

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently initiated NEC FUTURE, a unique planning process for the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC, the rail transportation spine of the Northeast, is a critical part of the transportation system in the Northeastern United States. It faces serious problems, with century-old infrastructure, outdated technology, and inadequate capacity to meet today's travel demand. As the region grows, its ability to meet future demands will continue to deteriorate unless significant improvements are made. With similar capacity constraints on the region's highways, and some of the most congested airports in the nation, the Northeast faces mobility challenges that could have serious economic repercussions for the region, and the nation.

Responding to these challenges, the FRA has initiated a comprehensive planning process for future rail investment in the corridor through 2040. The NEC FUTURE program includes the development of a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), which is comprised of both a service development plan (SDP) and a broad environmental analysis, or a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, will present the results of a broad examination of environmental impacts associated with the proposed service and service alternatives. The purpose of this solution is to improve mobility, effectively serve travel demand due to population and jobs growth, support economic development, reduce growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contribute to improved land utilization and investment in both urban and non-urban communities in the region.

July 27, 2012

As the lead Federal agency, the FRA will be conducting a series of public and agency scoping meetings in August in each of the corridor's eight states and the District of Columbia. The FRA would like to extend an invitation to you to attend the Agency Scoping Session in Maryland to be held on **Wednesday, August 15th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** The meeting will take place at **University of Baltimore, Thumel Conference Facilities, 11 W. Mount Royal Street, Baltimore, MD.** You are also invited to participate in the Public Scoping Meeting to be held on the same date and in the same location from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Public Scoping Meetings will be an open house format with a presentation by the FRA at 5:30 p.m. Additional information about the nine Public Scoping Meetings, including dates, times, locations and directions, is available on the website, www.necfuture.com.

We hope that you, or your designated alternate, will be able to participate in this Agency Scoping process to ensure that your office's mission, expertise, and priorities are reflected in FRA's planning process.

Please let us know if you can attend, or if you would like to send an alternate to attend. **To confirm your participation, please contact the NEC FUTURE team via email at info@necfuture.com by August 9th.**

More information about the project is available on the website, www.necfuture.com. It is possible to comment through the website as well. The scoping comment period will extend until September 14th.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
NEC Project Manager
USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration

CEQ Pilot Statement of Principles

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The goal of the NEC FUTURE Program is to prepare a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP) for the Washington D.C.–Boston Northeast Corridor (NEC). The PRCIP, consisting of a Service Development Plan (SDP) that articulates the overall scope and approach for proposed service and Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will define an integrated, comprehensive passenger rail transportation solution for the Northeast. The purpose of this solution is to improve mobility, effectively serve travel demand due to population and jobs growth, support economic development, reduce growth in carbon emissions and dependence on foreign oil, and contribute to improved land utilization and investment in both urban and non-urban communities in the region.

The federal agencies (Parties) listed below are committed to following a Statement of Principles demonstrating cooperation throughout the process of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) development of the Tier 1 EIS for the NEC (NEC Tier 1 EIS):

EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

1. Create a framework where all Parties have a voice in the NEC Tier 1 EIS process, and agree to open, frequent and candid communication, including the efficient resolution of any issues, misunderstandings or disagreements.
2. Facilitate early engagement and coordination in identifying issues, studies and overall development of the NEC Tier 1 EIS.
3. Identify goals and issues for the NEC Tier 1 EIS with the intent of using these goals to improve project level coordination in subsequent environmental processes on the Northeast Corridor.
4. Work collaboratively to identify environmental issues related to the development of a range of alternatives and environmental analysis.
5. Work collaboratively to pursue opportunities that allow for increased efficiency and to support the responsibilities of the Parties with regard to advancing the NEC Tier 1 EIS.
6. Participate in the planning process in a meaningful and substantive way, including attendance at periodic meetings and conference calls to the extent that staffing resources and competing priorities allow.

COMMUNICATION AND SCHEDULING PROTOCOLS

7. The Parties agree to communicate with each other within an agreed upon timeframe if a Party is unable to meet the schedule from the coordination plan to be developed.
8. Designate a point-of-contact (POC) for each Party and agree that all written communication to that Party will include the POC, and the POC agrees to provide or coordinate timely written communication on behalf of the POC's Party. The POC's routine communications on collaborative matters are not binding on that Party.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

9. A Party's POC issuing a written binding communication regarding the Party's concurrence, decision-making, approvals or disapprovals should clearly state that the written communication is intended to represent the Party's position on certain planning milestones, issues or draft documents.
10. FRA will provide the Parties with information and materials in an agreed upon timeframe. In turn, the Parties agree to perform the review of documents and provide substantive feedback to FRA in an agreed upon timeframe.
11. FRA will inform the Parties in writing as to milestones or decision-points in the planning process that require feedback or input and FRA and the Parties will agree to the timeframe for such feedback or input.
12. Develop a coordination schedule for the NEC Tier 1 EIS with input from each Party, and use best efforts to meet that schedule. FRA will post the schedule on the Infrastructure Dashboard (permits.performance.gov).

STATUTORY AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

13. Integrate each Party's mission and each Party's statutory and legal responsibilities into this framework because content of this Statement of Principles cannot alter the Parties' independent governing or regulatory obligations. Affirm that FRA is the lead agency under NEPA and Section 106.

PARTICIPATING FEDERAL AGENCIES (PARTIES)

Federal Railroad Administration
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
United States Environmental Protection Agency
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA)
National Park Service
United States Army Corps of Engineers
United States Coast Guard

Newsletters Distributed

1. Summer 2012
2. Spring 2013
3. Winter 2013
4. Fall 2014
5. Summer 2015

Table of Contents:

NEC Future Study Advances	1
What Alternatives will NEC FUTURE Study?	2
NEC FUTURE Scoping Meetings Scheduled	3
Stay Informed	4
What's Next?	4



NEC FUTURE Study Advances

The Northeast Corridor – the 457-mile railroad from Boston South Station to Washington Union Station – is the nation’s busiest rail line. Much of it was built over 100 years ago. Some 200 million passengers per year use its 2,200 daily trains to commute to work and travel across the region, supporting the region’s economy and providing an alternative to the severe highway and airport congestion in the Northeast. As busy as the NEC is today, it will need to handle significantly more trains and passengers over the next decades as the region grows a projected 15-25 percent by 2040.

More trains, faster trip time and better service – that is the goal for the NEC, requiring major, sustained investment in the rail line in the coming years. Defining how that happens – which projects are built, where, and how they are prioritized – is the focus of

NEC FUTURE, a strategic rail planning and environmental impact review program initiated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in 2012. NEC FUTURE will evaluate alternatives that accommodate the growth of the region’s intercity, commuter and freight rail services through 2040. Investment in the NEC is essential to improve regional mobility, meet future travel demand, support economic development and enhance sustainable transportation.

NEC FUTURE has two major components:

- A Service Development Plan (SDP) that provides a detailed plan for proposed rail service on the NEC, and
- A Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that assesses the broad corridor-wide impacts of proposed improvements, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). More detailed Tier 2 environmental reviews, which are not included in this effort, would examine potential impacts of site-specific projects that are advanced to implement the Tier 1 alternative selected.

Together, these components form a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), in accordance with the guidelines established by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The PRCIP is a foundation for future project development including engineering design, Tier 2 environmental reviews, environmental permitting and construction.

NEC FUTURE will create the opportunity for a broad public dialogue to establish a future vision for the corridor. By bringing together numerous stakeholders from the corridor’s eight states and the District of Columbia, the planning process will help foster broad agreement on future directions for corridor investment.





What alternatives will NEC FUTURE study?

NEC FUTURE will identify and evaluate a full range of investment alternatives to meet the region's passenger rail transportation needs. Both near and long term investments will be included in the analysis. A broadly defined set of Initial Alternatives will seek to capture the reasonable range of potential options that warrant consideration. The Scoping process will provide input to the development of this list, which will then be refined through a three-step screening process performed in conjunction with the Tier 1 EIS.

A "No Action Alternative", which is required under NEPA, and "Build Alternatives" will be considered in the Tier 1 EIS. The No Action Alternative represents the future rail system with planned/funded improvements and provides a baseline against which proposed improvements can be compared. The Build Alternatives may include physical improvements to expand capacity, investments to relieve key bottlenecks and efficiency improvements to reduce trip time.

The outcome will be a preferred program of investments to guide future project development.

How will alternatives be evaluated?

As alternatives are developed, they will undergo an increasingly detailed evaluation to narrow the number of alternatives to one or more that best address the problems identified in the Purpose and Need. The evaluation includes screening the alternatives to quantify their impacts, benefits and costs. This will include consideration of environmental impacts, ridership, operational impacts, capital and operating costs, and cost-benefit analysis. An initial "coarse screen" will follow the Scoping phase to eliminate alternatives that do not address the Purpose and Need or that are fatally flawed based on measureable criteria. The alternatives will then be subjected to more refined analysis as the project advances. Opportunities for public dialogue will be provided during this process.





NEC FUTURE Scoping Meetings Scheduled for August

On June 22, 2012, FRA published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register formally notifying agencies and the public of the intent to complete a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the NEC FUTURE project. As part of the EIS, a series of Scoping Meetings will be held to seek input from stakeholders on the transportation issues, concerns, and needs to be addressed in the NEC FUTURE study.

The Scoping Package, available on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com), provides a project overview, outlines the purpose and need for the project, and describes the Tier 1 EIS process in detail.

A series of nine Scoping Meetings will be held, one in each of the study area states and the District of

Columbia (see *Scoping Meetings – You’re Invited*). Attendees will have the opportunity to review display boards, meet with study team members and view a presentation. Each meeting will also include opportunities for public comment. At the conclusion of the Scoping process, a Scoping Summary will be prepared and posted on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com). The summary will describe the overall results of the scoping process, including comments received and any adjustments to the scope to reflect comments received from agencies, other interested parties and the general public.



Scoping Meetings—You’re Invited

BOSTON, MA

Massachusetts State Transportation Building
 10 Park Plaza
 Conference Rooms 1, 2 and 3
 Boston, MA
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 13, 2012

NEW HAVEN, CT

Shubert Theatre
 247 College Street
 New Haven, CT
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 14, 2012

BALTIMORE, MD

University of Baltimore
 Thumel Conference Facilities
 11 W. Mount Royal Street
 Baltimore, MD
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 15, 2012

NEWARK, NJ

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJPTA) Board Room
 One Newark Center, 17th Floor
 Newark, NJ
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 15, 2012

NEW YORK, NY

Farley Post Office/Moynihan Station
 380 W. 33rd Street, Room 4500
 New York, NY
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 16, 2012

PHILADELPHIA, PA

SEPTA Board Room Complex
 1234 Market Street
 Mezzanine Level
 Philadelphia, PA
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 20, 2012

WILMINGTON, DE

Carvel State Office Building
 820 N. French Street
 Wilmington, DE
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 20, 2012

WASHINGTON, DC

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
 777 N. Capitol Street NE
 Washington, DC
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 21, 2012

PROVIDENCE, RI

Department of Administration
 One Capitol Hill
 Providence, RI
 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Date: August 22, 2012

See the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com) for directions to the Scoping Meetings.



Stay Informed

There are many opportunities for the public to stay informed about the NEC FUTURE program. The project website (www.necfuture.com) provides up-to-date information and the opportunity to submit a comment or sign up to receive emails with project news. Project documents and presentations from public meetings will be available on the website.



More information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

info@necfuture.com

Or you may write to:

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
 USDOT
 Federal Railroad Administration
 Office of Railroad Policy & Development
 Mail Stop 20
 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
 Washington, DC 20590

What's Next?

NEC FUTURE began in February 2012. Initial activities included data collection and validation, stakeholder outreach, agency coordination, and the initiation of the Tier 1 EIS and Scoping process. Upcoming activities include the development of initial alternatives and ridership forecasts. In 2013, efforts will focus on the Draft Tier 1 EIS and the Draft Service Development Plan (SDP), which are scheduled for completion in the spring of 2014. These documents will then be finalized by early 2015. The overall project is scheduled for completion in the Spring of 2015, when a Record of Decision (ROD) is anticipated.

Upcoming Activities

ACTIVITY	DATE
Stakeholder Outreach	Ongoing
Data Collection & Validation	March—August 2012
Agency Coordination	Ongoing
Tier I EIS Scoping Period	June 22, 2012—September 14, 2012
Preliminary Alternatives	September 2012—January 2013



Table of Contents:

NEC FUTURE Station Pop-Up Tour Travels the Corridor	1
Preliminary Alternatives Report Identifies Options for NEC FUTURE	2
<i>April Dialogues— Focusing on Alternatives for the NEC</i>	3
FRA Perspective	3
Follow NEC FUTURE on Facebook	4



NEC FUTURE Station Pop-Up Tour in New York Penn Station (top) and Providence Station (bottom)

NEC FUTURE Station Pop-Up Tour Travels the Corridor

The NEC FUTURE Station Pop-up Tour capped off the spring outreach season, bringing information on the program to rail passengers along the Northeast Corridor. The three week tour popped up at 16 stations along the corridor, reaching over 12,000 rail passengers from all walks of life—including commuters, business travelers, families, retired citizens and young adults. Combining “old school” personal interaction with “new school” technology, it brought many new perspectives to the dialogue about what the NEC means to the region’s residents and what role it should play in the future.

“Choose ‘all of the above’ regarding the alternatives. Fix the existing tracks, eliminate bottlenecks, and get high speed rail.”

— Trenton Rider

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) team members were on hand to share information and respond to questions from those who stopped by the kiosk. Beginning at 7:00 am each day, the tour reached a wide range of passengers, including commuters traveling through the stations, and encouraged them to visit the website. This resulted in over a thousand new visits to the site.

... continued on page 4

Starting in Washington, D.C.’s Union Station on April 22nd (Earth Day) and ending in Boston’s South Station on May 11th (National Train Day), the station tour featured a mobile kiosk with graphic displays of the Study Area, study schedule and alternatives development process.

“If you could provide faster trains, you could give people back chunks of their lives!”

— New Haven Rider

“Fare integration between city, commuter and local transit would be excellent.”

— Boston Rider



NEC FUTURE Station Pop-Up Tour Schedule





Preliminary Alternatives Report Identifies Options for NEC FUTURE

The goal of NEC FUTURE is to develop a long-term investment program for improving and expanding rail service on the Northeast Corridor. Achieving this goal begins with developing alternatives to address challenges identified in the Purpose & Need Statement, which defines the transportation problems of the NEC rail line and the Northeast region. NEC FUTURE’s multi-step process defines a broad range of alternatives and then progressively tests and refines them, leading ultimately to the selection of an

investment program. Each stage of this process includes opportunities for public involvement.

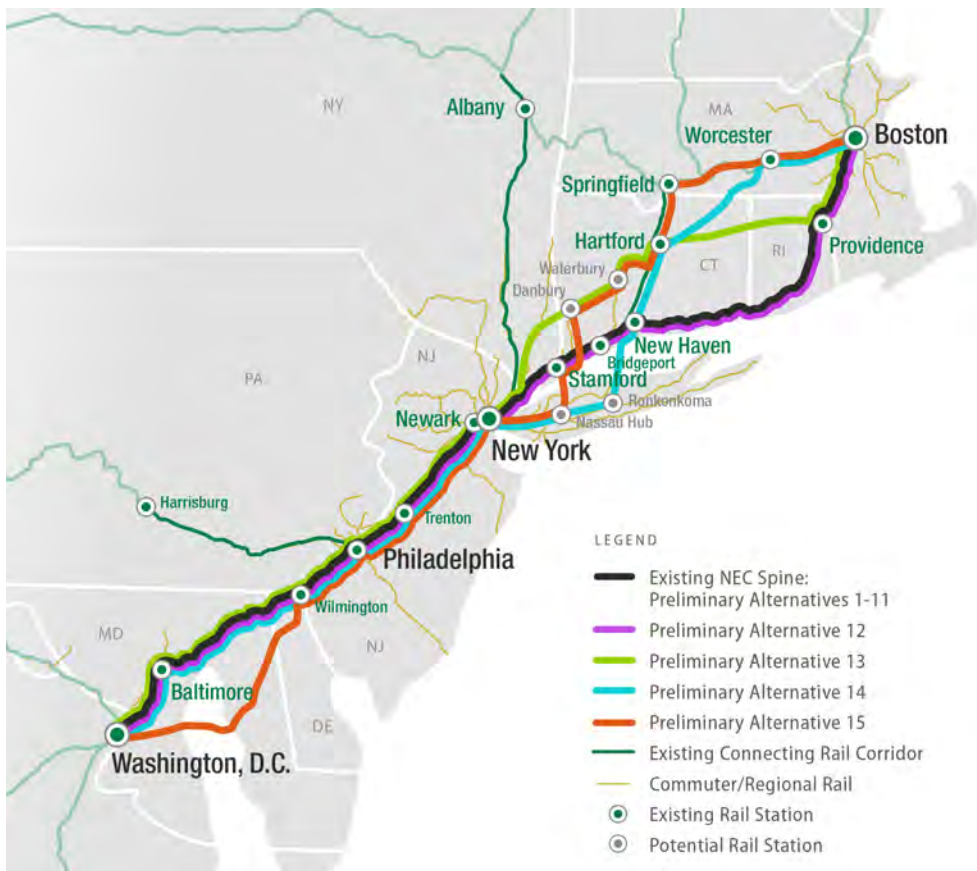
The NEC FUTURE [Preliminary Alternatives Report](#) describes the process of consolidating the 98 “Initial Alternatives,” comprising the spectrum of feasible options for enhancing service on the NEC, into a smaller set of 15 “Preliminary Alternatives.” The Preliminary Alternatives were grouped into four program investment levels, ranging from a modest level of investment that aims to improve the existing NEC to a high level of investment that

corresponds to the creation of a second spine for the NEC. All 15 alternatives maintain and improve service on the existing NEC Spine.

Within each of the four investment levels, alternatives were defined based on a combination of different service and route options. For example, some alternatives focus on providing faster service, some focus on more frequent service, and others attempt to maximize the number of “one-seat rides” available to passengers. The set of 15 Preliminary Alternatives captures the broad array of options for improving the NEC to support the region’s transportation needs. At the same time, each alternative is sufficiently distinct to allow for an evaluation of key differentiating variables such as ridership and service to off-corridor markets, among other criteria.

As NEC FUTURE advances, the Preliminary Alternatives will be assessed and a smaller set of “Reasonable Alternatives” will be identified for evaluation in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Tier 1 EIS will analyze the Reasonable Alternatives based on their performance in addressing the Purpose & Need and their environmental, socioeconomic and transportation impacts. In the Tier 1 EIS, the Reasonable Alternatives will be compared against the “No Action Alternative,” which defines the conditions that would exist in 2040 if no additional improvements were made beyond those that are currently planned, programmed, or expected to be implemented.

The NEC FUTURE website provides more detail on the [Preliminary Alternatives](#), including descriptions, key features and route maps for each alternative.



All 15 Preliminary Alternatives maintain and improve service on the existing NEC Spine. Alternatives 1-11 focus improvements along the existing spine, with varied service options and levels of investment. Alternatives 12-15 add a second spine, doubling the capacity of the NEC to provide dedicated high-speed rail as well as robust intercity and regional services. Some of these alternatives include off-corridor segments. These representative routes will be analyzed and refined as a smaller set of Reasonable Alternatives is developed.

April Dialogues—Focusing on Alternatives for the NEC

In early April, the FRA hosted April Dialogues, a series of public workshops, and invited the public to discuss alternatives for NEC FUTURE. The workshops were held on April 8th – 10th in New Haven, Newark, and Washington, D.C., and provided opportunities for the public to participate across the corridor. A public webcast was also held on April 18 for those unable to attend one of the workshops. A total of 200 participants attended the sessions.

The April Dialogues focused on the overall alternatives development process and the preliminary alternatives identified for consideration for NEC FUTURE. The 15 preliminary alternatives are documented

in the Preliminary Alternatives Report (see *Preliminary Alternatives Report – page 2*), which was released in early April. The Preliminary Alternatives Report and the presentation given at both the workshops and webcast are posted on the website (www.necfuture.com).

Each workshop included interactive exercises to gather public input on the preliminary alternatives and criteria for evaluating the alternatives.

... continued on page 4

FRA Perspective



Joseph Szabo, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

Since day one of our comprehensive Northeast Corridor planning effort, NEC FUTURE, we have been very lucky to have highly engaged stakeholders and the public with us every step of the way. More than a year later, your strong commitment continues to support our goal of thoroughly understanding the NEC’s long-term development needs.

Our scoping process allowed us to hear from nearly 800 individuals, agencies, and organizations, and we continue to receive comments online. To broaden public awareness of the program, we also recently completed a 16-city Pop-Up Train Station Tour that reached more than 12,000 riders and – judging by the photos we received every day from our tour volunteers – was a lot of fun, too.

When we look at the NEC’s history, we are constantly reminded that world-class economies do not develop by accident. The first segments of the NEC were constructed in the 1830s. And long before Boston’s Logan International, New York’s JFK International, or Washington, D.C.’s Reagan National airports – long before Interstate 95 – the NEC began powering what today ranks as the world’s fifth largest economy.

Today, while we clearly must continue investing in all transportation modes, the NEC is uniquely positioned to take pressure off the region’s capacity-constrained highways and airports. Interstate 95 is now routinely listed among the most congested roadways in the nation, while flights at four of the region’s airports rank among America’s most frequently delayed.

The NEC is also congested and constrained, while the region’s travelers are turning to rail in record numbers and demand for intercity and commuter services are both projected to grow significantly. We need to be prepared for the future.

Looking ahead, we know the NEC rail market is as strong and as full of potential as any in the world.

But we can’t rest on our laurels: We must act. And that’s exactly what NEC FUTURE is all about. When the program is complete, FRA and states will possess an immediately actionable rail investment plan, a clear vision guiding our development efforts.

We recently published our Preliminary Alternatives Report, and we will continue to complete NEC FUTURE with the help of exhaustive public engagement over the next 22 months.

As Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood wrote on his *Fast Lane* blog about NEC FUTURE, “If it sounds like a long, careful process, it is. But we want to do everything we can to get it right – to build the rail corridor the Northeast needs, and build it to last.”

Thank you for being a part of the most extensive NEC planning effort since the Carter Administration, and one of the most ambitious multi-state transportation planning projects in American history.

Joseph C. Szabo is the twelfth Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the first to come from the ranks of rail workers. He leads a staff of over 900 professionals located in Washington DC and at field offices across the United States who develop and enforce safety regulations; manage financial assistance programs; and oversee research and technology development programs.



Follow NEC FUTURE on Facebook

NEC FUTURE is now on the FRA's Facebook page. View postings and images of NEC FUTURE events at www.facebook.com/USDOTFRA.

Since the beginning of the program, over 14,000 unique viewers have visited the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com).

The NEC FUTURE website provides instant access to program documents, including the Preliminary Alternatives Report, past issues of the NEC FUTURE newsletter, meeting presentations, and FAQs. The website also provides a registration form to sign-up for email updates and a comment form to submit comments to the NEC FUTURE team. We hope you will join our growing contact list and stay up to date with the NEC FUTURE program.



April Dialogues (continued from page 3)...



Washington, DC Workshop

Many participants voiced support for a high level of investment in the NEC and a vision of a second NEC Spine, while others expressed a preference for more targeted initial expansion of the NEC. Participants also provided input on different service options featured in the alternatives, with many preferring a focus on service frequency. Public feedback highlighted ridership potential, cost, economic development and sustainability among the most important

criteria for evaluating the Preliminary Alternatives. The workshop results were documented and will help inform the study team's evaluation and refinement of the alternatives. The results will be posted on the website.

The FRA is committed to an open and inclusive public process throughout the NEC FUTURE program. The April Dialogues are part of this process and the FRA will continue to provide opportunities for broad public dialogue as the NEC FUTURE program advances. Previous public forums included scoping meetings in August 2012, which focused on identifying issues for study in NEC FUTURE, and December Dialogues in December 2012, which provided an overview of the scoping results, market analysis and alternatives development process.

NEC FUTURE Station Pop-Up Tour Travels the Corridor (continued from page 1)...

Many passengers were interested to learn about the Preliminary Alternatives, which could be viewed on iPads at the kiosk. The FRA gained a greater appreciation for the remarkable variety of ways in which riders use the NEC today, as well as their hopes and concerns about the future of the rail line. By building a broad base of public awareness, this intensive outreach effort sets a foundation for future discussion as NEC FUTURE progresses.

More information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

info@necfuture.com

Or you may write to:

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
USDOT
Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Railroad Policy & Development
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004



Table of Contents:

A Public Dialogue Begins: Scoping Highlights	1
Scoping Themes	1
<i>December Dialogues—</i> Continuing the Discussion	2
Next Steps— Developing Alternatives for NEC FUTURE	3
Stay Informed	4
Looking Ahead	4



Approximately 800 individuals submitted comments, many addressing multiple topics. In all, nearly 2,500 distinct comments were received on a wide range of topics, including study area boundaries, investment priorities, alternatives, stations, connecting service, freight service, and public involvement in the study process. The project team followed a systematic process to analyze each comment and identify themes. A Scoping Summary was prepared to document these comments and the scoping process. The Scoping Summary and scoping meeting presentations and display boards are available on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com).

Information learned in the scoping process will help shape and inform the development of alternatives and the environmental review process.

A Public Dialogue Begins: Scoping Highlights

One of the highlights of 2012 for the NEC FUTURE program was a scoping process that enabled agencies, stakeholders and the public along the corridor to learn about and contribute to shaping NEC FUTURE. In addition to opening a dialogue with the public, the scoping process provided an opportunity to hear directly from many stakeholders and contributed many important ideas for consideration as the program moves forward.

During the NEC FUTURE scoping period, which began on June 22nd and concluded on October 19th, a series of nine public and agency scoping meetings were held in each state along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and the District of Columbia. More than 500 members of the public and 120 representatives of federal, state, local and regional agencies attended these meetings to learn about the project and provide comments. Comments were also submitted on the NEC FUTURE website and by mail. A webinar on September 24th provided another opportunity for agencies to participate in the scoping process.



NEC FUTURE Scoping Meetings

Scoping Themes



As the study team reviewed and analyzed the nearly 2,500 distinct comments on a wide range of topics submitted by the public during the scoping period, several distinct

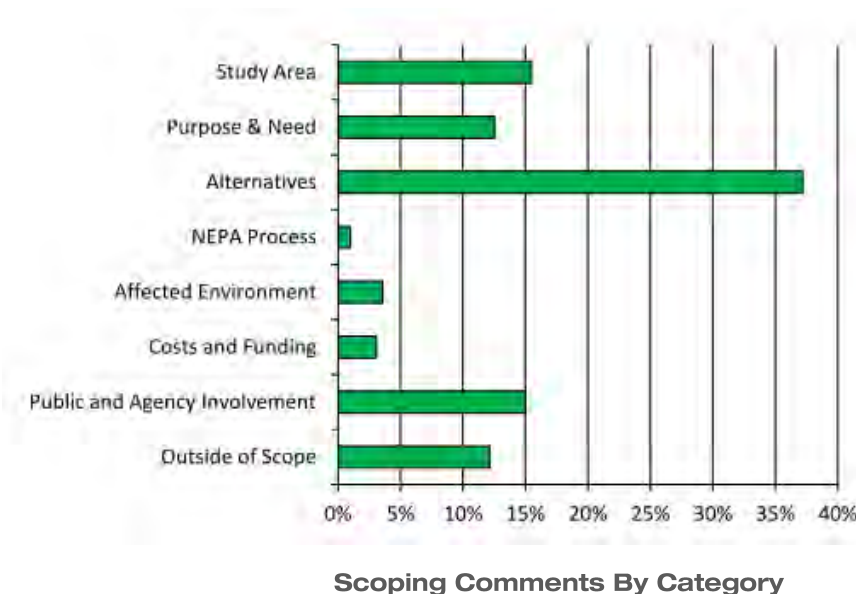
themes emerged. These themes are described in the Scoping Summary, which is available on the project website (www.necfuture.com).

... continued on page 2





Scoping Themes (continued from page 1)...



Themes included:

- Supporting an incremental approach to investment in the existing NEC;
- Improving connectivity between regional and local service through improved scheduling, increased capacity and through-ticketing, as well as improving intermodal connections;
- Balancing service to existing NEC communities with service to new markets;
- Focusing on an open and inclusive process throughout the NEC FUTURE project, and
- Coordinating with related projects and plans.

These themes will provide direction as NEC FUTURE advances.

December Dialogues – Continuing the Discussion

In early December, the FRA hosted December Dialogues, a series of informal workshops to continue the discussion with stakeholders that began during the scoping process. Workshops were held in each of the three project regions:

- North: Boston, December 3rd
- Central: New York, December 5th
- South: Philadelphia, December 4th

Two webinars on December 6th provided an additional opportunity to participate for those who were unable to attend one of the meetings.

The December Dialogues were designed to inform the study process and the development of alternatives. The workshops provided an overview of NEC FUTURE, a summary of

comments received during scoping, a description of the project’s market-based approach and the framework for alternatives development. They included small group exercises to help refine the goals for NEC FUTURE and discuss service characteristics to be considered in developing and evaluating the alternatives. The sessions provided valuable input for the FRA.

The December Dialogues presentation is available on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com).

The FRA will continue to provide opportunities for a broad public dialogue as the NEC FUTURE program advances. The public will be invited to participate in future public forums that will take place in communities along the NEC.



December Dialogues



Next Steps—Developing Alternatives for NEC FUTURE

In 2013, a key task for NEC FUTURE is the development of alternatives for detailed study in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These alternatives will be studied and evaluated in a multi-step process. Ultimately, this will lead to the selection of an investment program, setting forth a vision for future improvement and expansion of the NEC.

Developing the list of Initial Alternatives was the first step in the alternatives development process. The Initial Alternatives represent a broad range of options, many of which reflect comments received during the scoping process. The framework for developing and organizing the Initial Alternatives consisted of three major building blocks:

- **Program Investment Level** – Four different levels (low to high) define the extent of investment in the existing NEC and the ability to add capacity and service beyond the existing NEC spine.
- **Route/Network** – Specific route options were identified for serving markets both on and off the NEC spine.
- **Service Definition** – Defines different types of service that can be provided to markets, including today's conventional mix of commuter, intercity and high-speed trains and opportunities for new enhanced services providing alternate ways of serving the markets.

Using combinations of these building blocks, approximately 100 different alternatives were developed that covered the spectrum of opportunities to upgrade and expand the NEC, serve existing and new markets, provide better connectivity to other markets and develop new high-speed rail service.

As the alternatives development process advanced, these Initial Alternatives were organized and consolidated into a smaller set of Preliminary Alternatives that continue to include a broad array of service and investment options for the NEC. A Preliminary Alternatives Report will be prepared documenting the evaluation process and alternatives, and will be posted on the website when available in Spring 2013. These alternatives will be further analyzed and evaluated to produce Reasonable Alternatives for more detailed study in the Tier 1 EIS, leading to an investment program in the Record of Decision.

Approximately 100 different Initial Alternatives were developed that represent a broad range of options for future improvement and expansion of the NEC. Many of these reflect comments received during the scoping process.

Q: How does NEC FUTURE relate to Amtrak's Vision for High-Speed Rail?

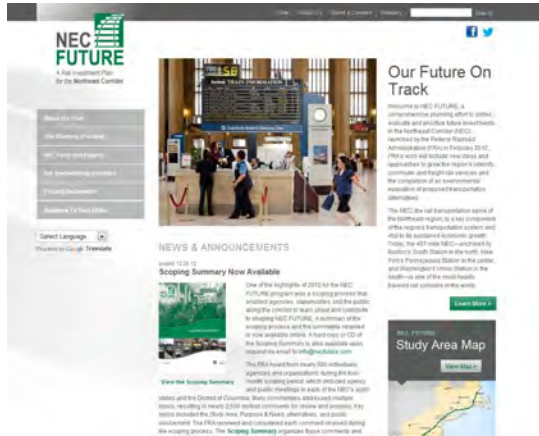
A: NEC FUTURE, which is being led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), is studying improvements to the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to serve all types of rail users, including commuter/regional rail and intercity service, while also accommodating expected growth in freight operations. A primary focus of NEC FUTURE is to identify the markets that can best be served by passenger rail as the Northeast region continues to grow. This analysis may indicate that a new high-speed route would best serve the intercity rail market in the Northeast. If that is the case, the NEC FUTURE program will identify the options for serving these markets.

Amtrak's proposal, [*A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor*](#), is one possibility for serving the high-speed market in the Northeast. Other alternatives have been identified and will also be considered. The final result of NEC FUTURE will be a selected investment program that addresses all of the NEC rail markets and enhances the regional transportation system.

Stay Informed

Read the Scoping Summary, view the December Dialogues presentation, and register to receive project email updates on the project website (www.necfuture.com).

Watch for the Preliminary Alternatives Report, to be available on the website this spring.



More information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

info@necfuture.com

Or you may write to:

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
 USDOT
 Federal Railroad Administration
 Office of Railroad Policy & Development
 Mail Stop 20
 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
 Washington, DC 20590

Looking Ahead

Initial activities for NEC FUTURE, which began in February 2012, included stakeholder outreach, agency coordination, data collection and validation, resource and regulatory agency coordination, initiation of the Tier 1 EIS and scoping process, and development of initial alternatives.

In 2013, upcoming tasks include preparation of a Preliminary Alternatives Report, and continued stakeholder outreach and agency coordination. Efforts will focus on the Draft Tier 1 EIS and the Draft Service Development Plan, which are scheduled for completion in the spring of 2014.

Upcoming Activities

ACTIVITY	DATE
Stakeholder Outreach and Agency Coordination	Ongoing
Preliminary Alternatives Report	Spring 2013
Alternatives Development	Throughout 2013
Tier 1 EIS Study Area Existing Conditions	February—July 2013
Ridership and Operations Analysis	February 2013—January 2014



Contents:

Household Travel Survey to Inform NEC FUTURE	1 - 2
Update on Alternatives Development	1 - 2
Environmental Review Process – A Programmatic Approach	3 - 4



Household Travel Survey to Inform NEC FUTURE

The analysis of future travel behavior is a key element of NEC FUTURE. How will travelers respond to the mix of transportation services that might be provided across the region? Given the complex travel patterns on the Northeast Corridor—with intercity, commuter, and connecting services—the NEC FUTURE team is creating a new integrated ridership forecasting model to assess future travel behavior. This model will use data from a new household survey and other regional travel data obtained from the NEC Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission (NEC Commission), individual commuter railroads, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, as well as other sources.



NEC FUTURE will identify a program of investment for the Northeast Corridor to meet the region's long term needs for rail service.

(cont'd on page 2)

Update on Alternatives Development

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) continues to advance the planning and environmental review process for NEC FUTURE, a comprehensive program to develop a long-term vision and phased improvements for the Northeast Corridor (NEC). By defining an investment program to improve the capacity and reliability of NEC rail service for both commuter and intercity travelers, NEC FUTURE aims to enhance the region's mobility options, serve new markets, and provide a foundation for rail service in 2040 and beyond.

The NEC FUTURE team is currently developing alternatives for detailed study in the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Tier 1 EIS Alternatives will provide distinct choices for the NEC, reflecting what the FRA has learned from initial analysis, public input, and over 100 meetings with stakeholders since the [Preliminary Alternatives](#) were developed in 2013. Each Tier 1 EIS Alternative will depict a different vision for passenger rail on the Northeast Corridor, with a defined set of geographic markets, a “representative route” (discussed on page 3), assumptions about the level of passenger rail service to be provided in 2040, and infrastructure improvements (defined at a conceptual level) that would support the level of service identified. A set of initial projects, applicable to all of the Tier 1 EIS Alternatives, will focus on the NEC's immediate needs. These common projects are expected to include modernization of infrastructure, replacement or rehabilitation of major tunnels and bridges, track improvements, and station improvements.

(cont'd on page 2)

What role will passenger rail play in the region's future?

A central task for NEC FUTURE is to determine the role of passenger rail service in the overall transportation system of the Northeast region.

By 2040 (the planning horizon for NEC FUTURE), will the same percentage of travel occur on the rail system as it does today, or will an increasing proportion of travelers choose rail for their travel? What share of total travel should the rail system be designed to attract and serve?

These questions are critical in determining the level of investment and types of improvements to the NEC to be made in the coming decades.





Household Travel Survey – *cont'd from page 1*

Household Travel Survey

The NEC FUTURE team recently completed a telephone survey of households throughout the Northeast region. The survey included questions about existing travel behavior, such as where people travel and their mode of transportation, their trip purpose, party size, trip costs, and other characteristics. In addition, the survey included questions about future travel preferences, such as choosing between modes of travel, premium or standard services, and costs. Approximately 12,000 completed surveys were obtained.

Regional Travel Data

In 2013, the NEC Commission, working with the nine different tolling agencies, collected E-Z Pass transaction data along the highway network between Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA, and surveyed users of the service. In addition, a license plate survey was conducted to gather supplemental data for un-tolled portions of the corridor. The combination of these efforts resulted in a database of observed highway travel patterns across the Northeast. This information complements comparable data, available from Amtrak, commuter rail operators, and the Federal Aviation Administration, that address observed rail and air travel behavior in the Northeast.

Applying the Data

The NEC FUTURE team will use the travel survey data obtained, along with existing data from Metropolitan Planning Organizations and railroads, to build a new Northeast Corridor ridership model to forecast travel behavior and ridership for each Tier 1 EIS Alternative. This information will help the FRA compare the performance of the alternatives and assess environmental impacts related to ridership and the number of trains on the corridor, such as noise and air quality impacts. The results will be summarized in the Tier 1 Draft EIS, and the model will be available for FRA's use in future projects.

Update on Alternatives Development – *cont'd from page 1*

In November 2014, the FRA will hold a series of public open house meetings throughout the corridor to present the Tier 1 EIS Alternatives and describe the process that will be used to evaluate them in the Tier 1 DEIS. Open houses will be held in each NEC state and the District of Columbia. FRA expects to publish the Tier 1 DEIS for public comment in late 2015. At that time, formal public hearings will be held in each of the NEC states and the District of Columbia. Updated information on the November 2014 public meetings and the 2015 public hearings will be posted on the project website at www.necfuture.com.



The FRA is considering the travel needs of existing and future riders. Here, SEPTA passengers board at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station.

Guiding Principles for Alternatives Development:

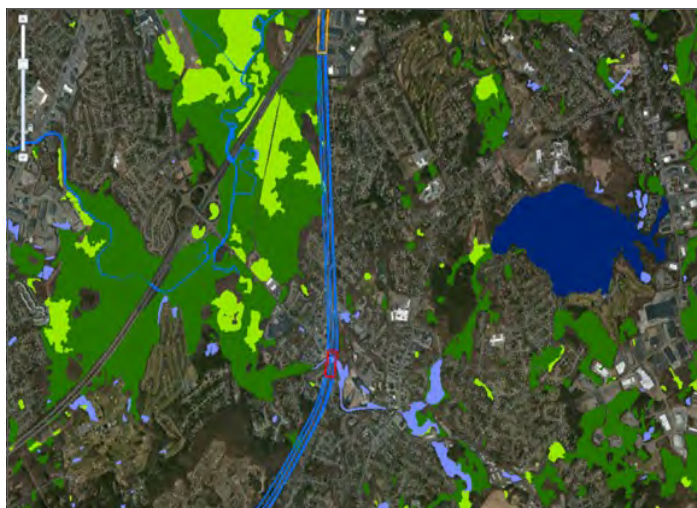
1. *Consider a broad range of alternatives informed by analysis of the market demand for future rail passenger service*
2. *Develop alternatives that focus on efficiency by investing in the existing corridor and exploring more efficient ways of providing service*
3. *Enable flexible, incremental implementation with a phased approach and a common set of projects for early action in any alternative*

Environmental Review Process – A Programmatic Approach

For NEC FUTURE, the FRA has chosen a tiered approach to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The first step is a broad, programmatic analysis of the environmental consequences of alternatives, known as a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Tier 1 EIS would be followed by more detailed Tier 2 environmental reviews, focused on specific projects and improvements. In the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives are being defined at a conceptual level and represent a range of possible rail improvements. For example, they will include information about the geographic locations to be served and the types of rail service to be provided, but not specify a precise alignment. Similarly, the analysis of environmental effects of each alternative will be conducted at a high level, based on readily available data. Once FRA completes the Tier 1 EIS and issues a Record of Decision, the more detailed project-level Tier 2 environmental reviews will follow.

Analysis Context

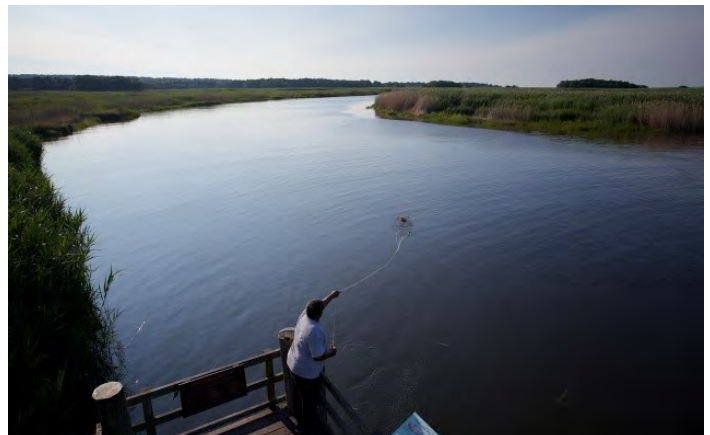
The size of the NEC FUTURE Study Area, a 457 mile corridor covering 50,000 square miles, presents special challenges in documenting existing conditions and assessing environmental consequences in a way that is meaningful for readers and for decision-making. For NEC FUTURE, a geographic information system (GIS) database has been created to compile, store, and analyze environmental characteristics for over twenty specific resource categories, such as wetlands, land cover, and cultural



GIS Mapping will enable the NEC FUTURE team to identify existing conditions and assess environmental consequences.

and historic resources, to name a few. These data were gathered from federal, state, and local sources.

The environmental database will include information that defines the characteristics of each Tier 1 EIS Alternative, such as routes, stations, service types, and type of construction by segment. Instead of a specific alignment, a Representative Route between 150 and 300 feet wide will be used. Together, resource-specific data and the Representative Route will be geographically represented as layers in the GIS database. The interaction of these layers will allow the NEC FUTURE team to assess the environmental consequences within the Affected Environment, the area in which existing conditions and environmental consequences will be identified.



The lower Connecticut River estuary is one of many water resources along the NEC.

The size of the Affected Environment will vary based on the resource. For most resources, it will consist of a “swath” or area between 2,000 feet and two miles in width, centered on the Representative Route. Other resources are not easily tied to a physical footprint. For example, air quality will be evaluated for airsheds defined by Metropolitan Planning Organizations; transportation effects will be considered for the entire Study Area with a focus on NEC stations and metropolitan areas. The environmental impacts of the Tier 1 EIS Alternatives will be compared for each resource and the findings will be presented in the Tier 1 DEIS document.

(cont'd on page 4)

Environmental Review Process – *cont'd from page 3*

Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

In addition to data collection and analysis, NEPA requires agency coordination and public involvement when preparing an EIS. Public meetings and workshops have been held periodically, and the FRA team has been meeting regularly with federal, state, and regional agencies, as well as railroads that operate along the NEC.

FRA has also engaged in early collaboration with federal and state environmental agencies. Informal roundtables with resource and regulatory agencies began in 2012, as part of a pilot project with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) designed to promote communication and help avoid the conflicts and delays that sometimes affect multi-state transportation projects. Through this inclusive and collaborative process, participating agencies developed a Statement of Principles that will guide future environmental consultation for NEC FUTURE. FRA continues to meet with these agencies on a regular basis.



Agency meetings in March 2014 brought together local, state, and federal agencies in Hartford, CT and eight other locations.



Discussion at public workshop in Newark, NJ, April 2013

How Can I Get Involved?



Come to a public open house in November 2014

The FRA will hold a series of public open house meetings throughout the corridor to present an update on the alternatives and the process that will be used to evaluate them in the Tier 1 DEIS. Meeting information will be posted on the project website.



Come to a public hearing in late 2015

FRA anticipates publishing the DEIS in late 2015. At that time, public hearings will be held in each of the NEC states and the District of Columbia to provide an opportunity for public comment. Information on these meetings will be posted on the project website.



Visit our website

Please visit www.necfuture.com to learn more about NEC FUTURE and opportunities for public involvement.



Stay up to date about project news

Sign up for the email list to receive project updates.



Tell us what you think

Submit a comment to the project team by completing the online comment form.

For Additional Information:

Please contact us at:
Info@necfuture.com

Or you may write to:
Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
USDOT
Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Railroad Policy & Development
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004



www.facebook.com/USDOTFRA



The FRA, @USDOTFRA



Contents:

Alternatives Evaluation Moving Forward	1
Tier 1 EIS Alternatives Introduced at Public Open Houses	1
Economic Development Workshops Inform Analysis	3



Alternatives Evaluation Moving Forward

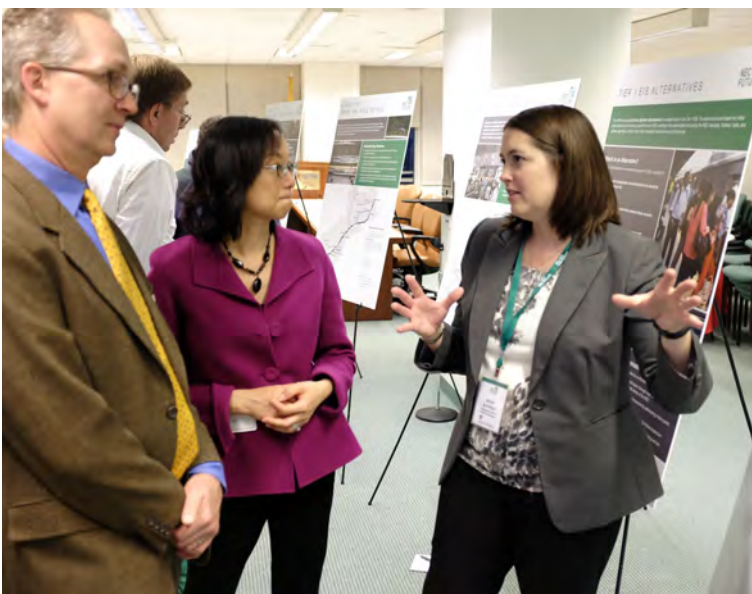
The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is moving forward on developing a long term vision for train service on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and a program of phased improvements that would be required to support enhanced service, add new markets, and meet the region's future mobility needs. The NEC FUTURE team is currently evaluating alternatives as part of the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 Draft EIS). The alternatives selected for detailed evaluation in the Tier 1 Draft EIS are based on technical and collaborative reviews, as well as feedback from more than 200 stakeholder meetings and multiple public engagement activities over the past two years.

Three Action Alternatives, as well as a No Action Alternative, were discussed at a series of public open house meetings in November (see Public Open House article, below). Each Action Alternative presents a different vision for meeting future rail transportation needs, while addressing aging infrastructure, enhancing capacity, connectivity, performance and resiliency, and promoting economic growth and environmental sustainability.

(cont'd on page 2)

Tier 1 EIS Alternatives Introduced at Public Open Houses

Nearly 400 participants attended a series of NEC FUTURE public open house meetings hosted by the FRA in November 2014. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the alternatives being developed for evaluation in the Tier 1 Draft EIS and provide an opportunity for the public to learn about NEC FUTURE, ask questions, and provide comments.



The open house meetings were held in each of the eight NEC states and the District of Columbia. The meetings included display stations with an overview of NEC FUTURE, the Tier 1 EIS Alternatives, and the environmental review process. At each station, NEC FUTURE team members engaged in one-on-one discussions with meeting participants and responded to questions and comments.

A video featuring FRA officials and footage from the corridor provided additional background on the objectives of NEC FUTURE. In addition, an animated video demonstrated the tremendous volume and mix of trains that operate on the NEC throughout the day. Both videos, as well as the meeting display boards, are available for viewing on the NEC FUTURE website at http://www.necfuture.com/get_involved/public_meetings.aspx.

(cont'd on page 4)





Alternatives Evaluation Moving Forward – cont’d from page 1

A description of each alternative follows:

► **No Action Alternative:**

The No Action Alternative represents the condition of the Northeast region’s multi-modal transportation system in 2040 without the NEC FUTURE investment program. It serves as a baseline for comparison with the three Action Alternatives. The No Action Alternative includes improvements to the rail system that are currently planned and programmed, as well as planned highway and airport upgrades. It includes a modest proportion of the significant backlog of work associated with bringing the NEC to a state of good repair. Under the No Action Alternative, NEC rail services do not keep pace with the region’s growth, and as a result, service quality is likely to decline. More information can be found in the No Action Alternative Report on the website: www.necfuture.com.

► **Alternative 1: Maintain the Current Role of Rail:**

Alternative 1 maintains the role of rail as it is today, with sufficient service levels to keep pace with the significant growth projected in the region’s population, employment, and travel demand. This alternative expands capacity, adds tracks, and relieves key chokepoints, particularly through northern New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.

► **Alternative 2: Grow the Role of Rail:**

Alternative 2 expands the role of rail to accommodate a greater proportion of Northeast travelers as population and employment grow. South of New Haven, CT, service and infrastructure improvements are focused generally within the existing NEC, while north of New Haven, a new supplemental, two-track route is added between New Haven, Hartford, and Providence. Alternative 2 serves new markets, reduces trip times, and addresses capacity constraints to support a very significant growth in rail traffic. The existing NEC expands to four tracks, with six tracks through portions of New Jersey and southwestern Connecticut.

► **Alternative 3: Transform the Role of Rail:**

Alternative 3 transforms the role of rail in the Northeast, positioning it as a dominant mode for travel in the region. In addition to upgrading the existing NEC, Alternative 3 includes a new two-track second spine that supports high-performance rail services between major markets, provides significant reduction in travel time, and provides additional system capacity. South of New York, the second spine closely parallels the existing NEC, while adding new stations in downtown Baltimore, downtown Philadelphia, and at Philadelphia International Airport.

What's in an Alternative?

Each Tier 1 EIS Alternative is an investment program for 2040, consisting of:

- A set of geographic markets (cities) to be served by passenger rail
- A representative route that connects these markets
- Assumptions about the level of passenger rail service that will be provided to those markets in 2040
- Infrastructure improvements, defined at a conceptual level, that would support the level of service identified

Between New York and Boston, several route options are being analyzed.

* * * * *

Each Action Alternative improves service on the existing NEC, achieves a state of good repair, and expands the range of services on the NEC. Each also protects freight rail access and the opportunity for future freight expansion.

More information on the alternatives, including assumptions regarding service levels, routes and potential new stations, will be provided in a Tier 1 EIS Alternatives Report, to be posted on the NEC FUTURE website this summer. The Tier 1 Draft RIS, with a detailed analysis of the alternatives and comparison against the No Action Alternative, will be released for public comment later this year.

Economic Development Workshops Inform Analysis

The analysis of the NEC FUTURE Alternatives, currently underway, includes a broad assessment of economic effects. To supplement the published data and economic forecasts being used in this assessment, the FRA conducted a series of Economic Development Workshops in October 2014. Nine workshops were held, each focusing on a different geographic market within the NEC FUTURE Study Area. The participants included experts representing different perspectives on development in the region, including private developers, local planning and economic development specialists, and academic institutions.

At each workshop, participants shared expert opinions on how improved passenger rail services could affect development and land values near stations, whether the pattern of development among the various metropolitan areas would be altered, and whether reduced trip times and increased service frequencies would lead to greater economic interaction among metropolitan areas and/or changes in labor markets.

Participants agreed that improved rail access and connectivity, particularly in new markets, could accelerate development. Participants in the Boston and New York workshops stressed the benefits for their labor markets in being able to attract skilled workers. Those in Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia saw opportunities for greater labor market integration among these urban areas with more frequent and cost-competitive rail service. For example, in both Wilmington and Baltimore, enhanced rail service was viewed as essential for recruiting talent and bringing jobs to their communities. Participants in both Long Island and Connecticut also felt that their economies could attract and retain jobs more successfully with the implementation of enhanced rail service.

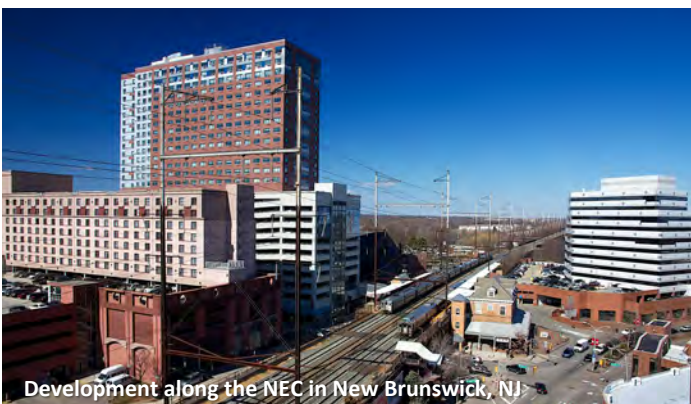


Boston's South Station is located within easy walking distance of the city's growing financial and seaport districts.

The workshops also explored tradeoffs among reduced travel time, connectivity, and frequency of service. In the southern and central parts of the corridor, travel time was considered secondary to service frequency and connectivity in spurring development. In the northern portion of the corridor, travel time was valued more highly, with the potential for a convenient day trip between Boston and New York City perceived as a major benefit. At each workshop, participants cited connectivity to New York as a priority for economic development, suggesting that the economy of the corridor will remain "New York-centric" even as smaller markets become more integrated over time.

Rail access to airports was another key theme. In Baltimore, improved access to Baltimore-Washington International Airport was seen as a means to help the airport expand and generate jobs, as well as supporting the burgeoning technical industry near the airport. Similarly, participants in Stamford viewed better airport access as a way to attract and retain business in central Connecticut.

The workshop findings are being used to develop qualitative factors for consideration along with the quantitative measures to be used in the economic effects assessment. The results will be summarized in the Tier 1 Draft EIS.



Development along the NEC in New Brunswick, NJ

Tier 1 EIS Alternatives Introduced at Public Open Houses—cont'd from page 1

The meetings were attended by a cross section of the population along the corridor and included local residents and businesses, agency representatives, elected officials, real estate and development organizations, and university students. Discussions at each meeting covered a wide range of topics. Common themes included the need to fix the existing NEC, its importance to the regional economy, the potential for station area development, airport connections, affordable fares, bicycle access, and easier ticketing. Participants also expressed interest in knowing more about the cost and phasing of improvements, and whether there would be an ability to combine elements from more than one alternative (answer: yes, depending on the results of the analysis and public comment period on the Tier 1 Draft EIS).

A brief survey conducted at the meetings gathered additional public feedback. Participants were asked what types of service enhancements would lead them to use NEC rail service more often, with the option of choosing more than one answer. The top factors cited were reduced travel time (mentioned by 59% of respondents), more frequent trains (50%), and lower fares (40%). Nearly 90% of respondents indicated a favorable view of the information provided at the meetings. Comments received from the public provided valuable input to the NEC FUTURE team and will be considered in the evaluation of the alternatives.



Animation of NEC train movements as shown at public open house meetings

How Can I Get Involved?



Visit our website

Please visit www.necfuture.com to learn more about NEC FUTURE and opportunities for public involvement.



Stay up to date on project news

Sign up for the email list to receive project updates.



Tell us what you think

Submit a comment or question to the NEC FUTURE team by completing the online comment form.



Attend a public hearing

FRA anticipates publishing the Tier 1 Draft EIS this fall. Public hearings will follow in each of the NEC states and the District of Columbia to provide an opportunity for public comment. The draft document and information on the hearings and other ways to provide comments will be posted on the website.

For Additional Information:

Please contact us at:
Info@necfuture.com

Or you may write to:
NEC FUTURE
USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration
Office of Railroad Policy & Development
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004



www.facebook.com/USDOTFRA



The FRA, @USDOTFRA



List of Environmental Justice Organizations Contacted

List of Environmental Justice Organizations Contacted

District of Columbia

Annie E. Casey Foundation, Washington, DC
Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC
Greater Washington Urban League, Washington, DC
Latino Economic Development Center, Washington, DC

Maryland

Casa de Maryland, Hyattsville, MD
Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH) Laboratory, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
Environmental Justice Partnership, Baltimore, MD
Greater Baltimore Urban League, Baltimore, MD
Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Baltimore, MD
NAACP Baltimore, Baltimore, MD

Delaware

Chinese American Community Center, Hockessin, DE (Greater Wilmington)
Latin American Community Center, Wilmington, DE
Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, Wilmington, DE
Wilmington NAACP Branch, Wilmington, DE

Pennsylvania

Asian Americans United, Philadelphia, PA
Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Inc, Philadelphia, PA
Bucks County Coalition for African American Concerns, Morrisville, PA
Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Philadelphia, PA
Delco Alliance for Environmental Justice, Philadelphia, PA
Interfaith Housing Development Corporation of Bucks County, Levittown, PA
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, Philadelphia, PA
Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service and Education Center, Philadelphia, PA
NAACP-Chester Branch, Chester, PA
NAACP-Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Taller Puertorriqueno, Philadelphia, PA
Urban Affairs Coalition, Philadelphia, PA
Urban League of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

New Jersey

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, Mendham, NJ
Focus, Hispanic Center for Community Development, Inc., Newark, NJ
Ironbound Community Corporation, Newark, NJ
La Casa de Don Pedro, Newark, NJ
Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ
New Brunswick NAACP, New Brunswick, NJ
New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance
New Jersey Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce, Somerset, NJ

New Jersey Work Environment Council, Ewing, NJ
Newark NAACP, Newark, NJ
Puertorriquenos Asociados for Community Organization, Inc., Jersey City, NJ
Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Newark, NJ
Trenton NAACP, Trenton, NJ
Urban League of Essex County, Newark, NJ

New York

Asian Americans for Equality, New York, NY
Chinatown Partnership, New York, NY
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, New York, NY
El Puente, Brooklyn, NY
Federation of Indian Associations, Jackson Heights, NY
Hispanic Federation, New York, NY
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, New York, NY
New York City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Inc., New York, NY
New York Urban League, New York, NY
WE ACT for Environmental Justice, New York, NY

Connecticut

Alpha Community Services, Bridgeport, CT
Bristol Community Organization, Bristol, CT
Centro de la Comunidad, New London, CT
Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (CAUSA), Hartford, CT
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, Hartford, CT
Connecticut Community Foundation, Waterbury, CT
Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, Franklin, CT
Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice, Hartford, CT
Greater Stamford Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Stamford, CT
Hartford Neighborhood Center, Inc., Hartford, CT
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Bridgeport, Inc., Bridgeport, CT
International Institute of Connecticut, Inc., Bridgeport, CT
JUNTA for Progressive Action, New Haven, CT
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, Hartford, CT
Multicultural Leadership Institute, North Haven, CT
NAACP, New London, CT
New Haven NAACP, New Haven, CT
Norwalk Branch NAACP, Norwalk, CT
Norwalk Economic Opportunity NOW, Inc. (NEON), Norwalk, CT
Spanish Action Council, Inc., Waterbury, CT
Spanish American Merchants Association, Hartford, CT
Spanish Community of Wallingford, Wallingford, CT
Stamford NAACP, Stamford, CT
Urban League of Greater Hartford, Hartford, CT
Urban League of Southern Connecticut, Stamford, CT

Rhode Island

Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy, Providence, RI
Progreso Latino, Central Falls, RI
Rhode Island Urban League, Providence, RI
Socio-Economic Development Center for Southeast Asians, Providence, RI
Urban League of Rhode Island, Providence, RI

Massachusetts

Asian Community Development Corporation, Boston, MA
La Alianza Hispana, Roxbury, MA
Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce, Springfield, MA (statewide)
NAACP Boston, Roxbury, MA
NAACP Springfield Branch, Springfield, MA
Nuestras Raíces, Holyoke, MA
Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Springfield, MA
Regional Environmental Council, Worcester, MA
Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, Roxbury, MA
Urban League of Massachusetts, Roxbury, MA
Urban League of Springfield, Springfield, MA
Vietnamese-American Civic Association, Springfield, MA
Worcester Branch NAACP, Worcester, MA