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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

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!”

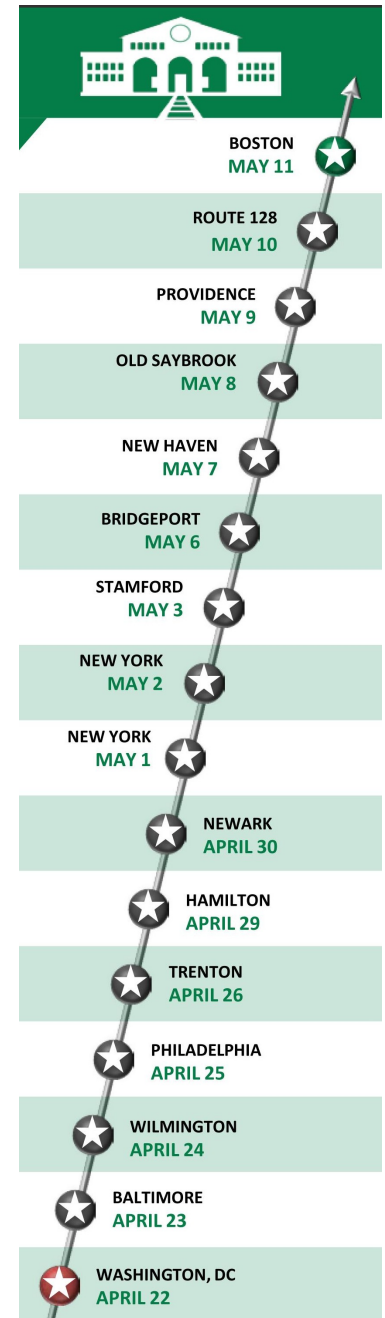
— New Haven Rider

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

— Boston Rider

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.

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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.

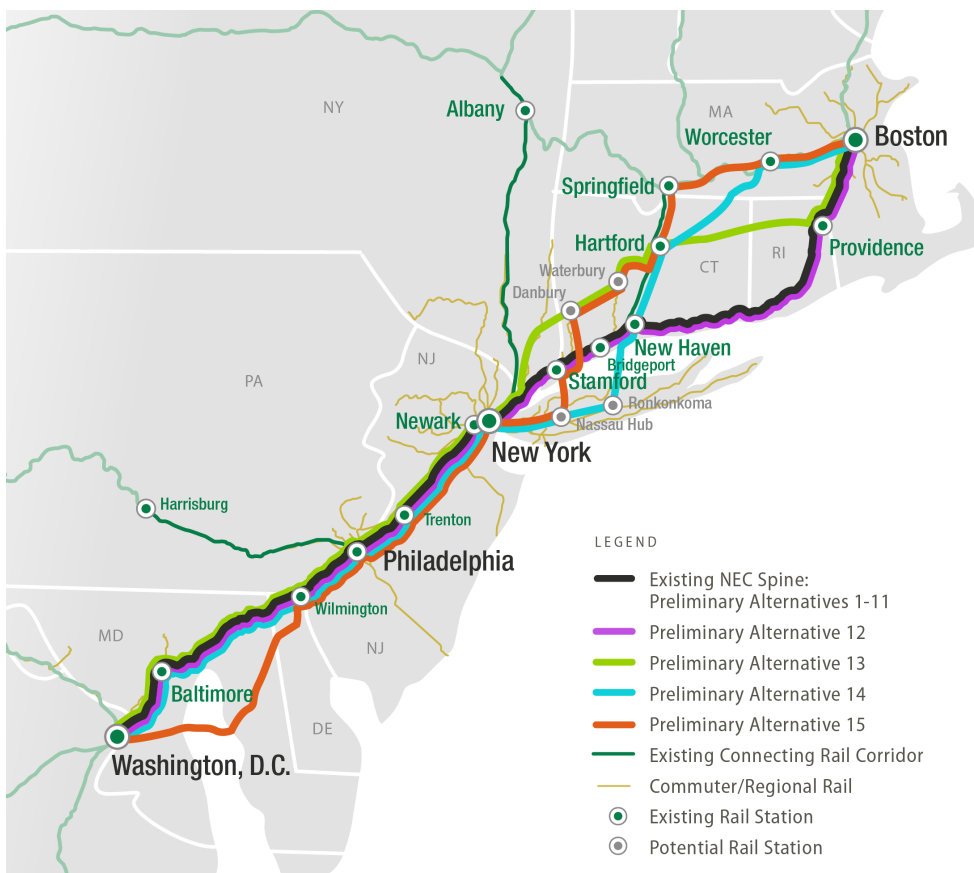
The NEC FUTURE [Preliminary Alternatives Report](#) describes the process of consolidating the 98 “Initial Alternatives,” comprising the spectrum of feasible options for enhancing service on the NEC, into a smaller set of 15 “Preliminary Alternatives.” The Preliminary Alternatives were grouped into four 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.

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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.



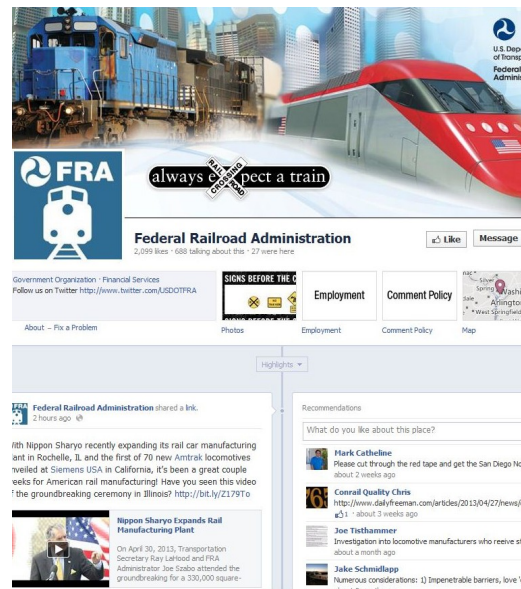


Follow NEC FUTURE on Facebook

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:

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