



Our Vision: The NGEC will provide national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment.

Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)

Monthly Activities Report: November 30, 2021

Submitted By: Steven J Hewitt, Program Manager, S305 NGEC

Public law 110-432 required Amtrak to:

...establish a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, comprised of representatives of Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, host freight railroad companies, passenger railroad equipment manufacturers, interested States, and as appropriate, other passenger railroad operators.

"The purpose of the Committee shall be to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment.

(b) Functions – the Committee may –

- 1) Determine the number of different types of equipment required, considering variations in operational needs and corridor infrastructure.*
- 2) Establish a pool of equipment to be used on corridor routes funded by participating states; and*
- 3) Subject agreements between Amtrak and States, utilize services provided by Amtrak to design, maintain and remanufacture equipment."*

Executive Board

Chair: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT

Vice Chair: George Hull, Amtrak

Secretary: John Oimoen, IDOT

Treasurer: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

The Executive Board holds bi-weekly conference calls – Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern

During the month of November 2021, the Executive Board met three times via web conference, on the 2nd, the 16th and the 30th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of November 2021 include:

- Technical subcommittee review of the Access Board Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding accessibility guidelines for Rail vehicles:

The intent of this effort is for states to submit their comments to the Access Board Docket on the Accessibility Requirement Guidelines Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Amtrak has submitted its comments already and will share them with the Executive Board. Once the comments have come back (The comment period has been extended) and there is ultimately a Final Rule, the technical subcommittee (through its technical working groups) will compare them with the NGEC specifications to ensure compliance and make any necessary changes by utilizing the NGEC DCR process.

The comment period on the advanced NPRM which had been extended until July 14, 2020, has ended. As of 8-20-20, the FRA reported that the Access Board is reviewing comments received. On 8-20 -20, Melissa Shurland, FRA, reported to the technical subcommittee, "we are in a holding pattern to see what the comments were and what the Access Board's disposition of them will be." Melissa will keep the NGENC technical subcommittee informed as the process is completed.

As of 11-30-21, nothing new has been reported.

- Treasurer's Report – 11-30-21:

Balance/ Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

Amount Spent through September 2021: \$834,812.51

Balance remaining: \$ 415,187.49

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$333,925.00

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$13,913.54

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$81,262.49

- 2021 NGENC two-pager:

The 2021 version of the NGENC two-page backgrounder/educational document continues to be available electronically or in hard copy by request - contact Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com. To date 615 electronic copies have been distributed.

The FASC is in the process of finalizing updates to the two-pager for the 2022 version and will look to approve changes and send on to the Executive Board on its call on 12-8-21.

- Annual By-Law Review/Update:

On 11-30-21, the Executive Board adopted revisions as proposed by the Finance and Administrative subcommittee on 10-13-21. The adopted revised By-Laws document was distributed to all Executive Board members and to AASHTO for posting to the NGENC website on 12-1-21.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 10-31-21:

Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Carshell final design has been approved and the first cab structures are in production. Remaining Cab Car FDRs are in the final submittal and review stage and the cab car Clearance information has been submitted to Amtrak. IDOT Café Car FDRs are in the closure stage and Galley open items are being addressed.

The Cab Car Collision and Corner Post Appendix F testing is scheduled to resume in November and the compression test report is in work. The FAI for the cab Side Window is occurring this week in Canada.

Ninety-four cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT and Caltrans cars are being prepared for Conditional Acceptance and revenue service while open items are being addressed.

In November 2021, the Executive Board did not receive an update from California DOT.

- Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 11-30-21:

Siemens submitted IDRs for all thirty-nine topics. Metro-North agreed and told them to proceed on thirty-four of the IDRs Siemens submitted four revised IDRs and there is one that remains open.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 11-30-21:

On the Chargers (ACL 42) – 4 are on the property for testing

On the Acela – testing and qualification processes continue.

On the Intercity Passenger Rail equipment – preliminary Design Review continues.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 11-30-21:

This procurement remains in the “cone of silence” period.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

On 2-23-21 at the Annual Meeting a comprehensive overview/update of the VIA Rail procurement was presented by Mario Bergeron, Bruce Cacciola, Ron Bartels, and Joe DiLiello. This full presentation was distributed to NGECC members and is posted on the NGECC website.

The next update is anticipated to take place at the NGECC Annual Meeting 2-25-22.

- Document Control Update - as of 11-30-21:

The DMU review panel meeting will take place on 12-7-21 and the intent is to review and approve the proposed changes/updates and submit them to the Executive Board. The Technical Writer is ready to receive the changes and complete the revisions.

DMU Review Panel members:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Review Panel Chairman
 Jeff Gordon, FRA
 Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT
 Gurleen Boparai, Caltrans

Support:

Mike Kraft, Amtrak
 Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager
 Larry Salci, Review Panel Consultant
 Steve Hewitt, NGECC Manager

- Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Rail Car Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the 2021 Annual Meeting and were distributed to NGECC members and can be found on the NGECC website.

- Exploring/confirming funding options beyond 9-30-2023:

On 10-5-21, Mike Murray, FRA, reported that the FRA is looking at options and briefing leadership in the Office of Railroad Policy and Development. This will take a couple of months and Mike suggested that the Board not carry this as an agenda item for the bi-weekly meetings as it will take some time. When he has more information, he will let the Board know.

Tim Ziethen reported that he has reached out to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs to follow-up with him on previous discussions that an option could be Amtrak funding the NGECC through its grant. It was the general thinking that this would be a possibility as the NGECC was included as a potential type of recipient in the overall Amtrak grant request. Tim will report back once he hears from Ken Altman.

Ray Hessinger suggested that the FASC follow these issues and keep this on their monthly agenda, and report back to the NGECC Executive Board as more information is forthcoming.

The NGECC will explore potential grant opportunities and potential appropriations requests for funding beyond 2023.

NGECC Annual Meeting 2022:

As announced previously, the NGECC will hold its 2022 Annual Meeting in-person at the Hyatt Regency, Capitol Hill on February 25, 2022. The meeting will begin at 8:30am and conclude around Noon (Eastern).

More details will follow as an agenda is developed and the time for the meeting draws nearer. All NGEC members have been informed of the date and location of the meeting.

- Establishing Priorities and developing updated work plan for 2022:

On 11-30-21, Ray Hessinger noted that this has been a standing agenda item for a while now and it seems that “we are coalescing around updating the reference specifications” and drawing documents (series 800 and 900) and returning to the Trainset and DMU specifications to address the carbody material issue that was raised during the DMU update. Ray stated that, for now, he will “keep these penciled in” as the priorities.

Ray also alerted Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager to be prepared to give a presentation at the Annual Meeting that provides a summary of 2021 activities and an action plan for 2022 which should be based on the aforementioned priorities.

Additionally, Ray noted that he would like to take a look at the organizational changes that Metro-North made to the Dual Mode Locomotive Specification and consider them to be applied across the board to all of the NGEC specifications. They are not technical changes they simply organized the document to be more user friendly and easier to read.

- Preparing for the NGEC 2022 Annual Meeting:

As of 11-30-21, the meeting continues to be planned as in-person at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington, DC and turned to Shayne Gill to confirm that AASHTO’s plans have not changed. Shayne Gill, AASHTO, confirmed that the plans for the meetings the week of 2-21-22 are that they will be held in-person. (The NGEC meeting will be on 2-25-22 from 8:30am to Noon).

Steve Hewitt noted that he and Ray Hessinger have discussed making the NGEC meeting hybrid – in-person with remote capabilities - which is how the SPRC is conducting its meeting earlier that week. The NGEC usually refrains from having remote access, but because of travel limitations due to COVID, it would be reasonable to allow for that access.

Steve Hewitt stated that he will prepare a first DRAFT meeting agenda for discussion with Ray Hessinger next week and following that discussion a DRAFT agenda will be provided to the Executive Board in advance of the next call – 12-14-21.

An organizational/coordination meeting among the participating organization during the week of 2-21-22 (SPRC, SAIPRC, AASHTO, NGEC) is scheduled for 12-13-21.

Technical subcommittee

Chair: George Hull, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Joe Paul, Amtrak

The Technical subcommittee holds bi-weekly conference calls on Thursdays at 3:00pm Eastern

Due to the fact that Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day landed on the Technical subcommittee scheduled call dates, the subcommittee did not meet in November 2021. It will next meet on 12-9-21.

The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee

Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT

Second Vice Chair: John Oimoen, Illinois DOT

The Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) will hold a conference call every four weeks on Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern.

During the Month of November 2021, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on 11-10-21:

- Treasurer's Report as of 11-30-21 – reported to the Executive Board:

Balance/ Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

Amount Spent through September 2021: \$834,812.51

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Follow up Discussion regarding future funding options beyond 9-30-2023:

Mike Murray, FRA, had reported to the Executive Board on 10-5-21 that the FRA is looking at options and briefing leadership in the Office of Railroad Policy and Development. This will take a couple of months and Mike suggested that the Board not carry this as an agenda item for the bi-weekly meetings as it will take some time. When he has more information, he will let the Board know. Ray Hessinger suggested, at that time, that this information be reported to the FASC on its next call (today) and that the FASC keep track of it.

On today's call, Mike Murray reiterated that it would take several months and that he does not feel it should be discussed on every call. It was agreed that once FRA has a response Mike Murray will report it to either the Executive Board or the FASC whichever meets first.

Tim Ziethen reported that he has reached out to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs, and Tim has confirmed that Amtrak is supportive of the work of the Committee (NGEC) and that funding through either Amtrak or FRA are the best options, but other options could also be explored.

For now, this item will be carried as an open item to be tabled until such time as additional information is forthcoming.

- Conveying the message as of 10-31-21:

Quarterly Grant Progress Report: Finalizing the 2022 NGEC two-pager/comments received - Tim/Steve:

Steve Hewitt walked through the proposed changes from the 10-13-21 FASC call and reviewed status updates

Proposed changes:

On the front page:

Change the date to 2022

Add the NGEC website information on the top of page 1 in the green area.

Update the Timeline to include the TSSSA document released in September 2021 and update the DMU Revision to December 2021 and the Trainset Specification update to t to Spring 2022 unless completed sooner. It is ready to go before the Technical subcommittee, but that body will not meet again until 12-9-21 due to Veterans Day and Thanksgiving landing on the dates of the November subcommittee calls.

Also, to update the page 1 Timeline, it was suggested that we add the number of Charger locomotives that have been entered into service since the first one was delivered (July 2017) and the number of passenger rail cars that have been delivered since the first on in February 2020.

As of 11-30-21, Amtrak reported the following numbers on Locomotives in service:

Midwest States (IDOT, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri) – 33 locomotives

Washington (WSDOT) – 8 Locomotives

CALTRANS – 24 Locomotives

Total for the two-pager update: 65

John Oimoen, IDOT, on 11-10-21 reported that:

For the Midwest states -42 cars have been delivered.

Steve Hewitt will reach out to Caltrans to get their numbers as well.

Page two:

On the third set of Results change the first bullet to say:

"Standardized specifications ensure rolling stock designs suited for use across North America."

On the second bullet add a period (.) to the end of the sentence.

Additionally, on the last call, Jeff Gordon, FRA suggested that we use a picture of the VIA Rail Trainset that has just been delivered (VIA Rail used NGEC specs as the base spec).

Steve Hewitt reported that he did not yet reach out to VIA Rail because several NGEC members have raised a concern with having the VIA Rail photo on the front page rather than a photo of equipment used in the US.

Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger discussed this on their recent weekly one on one call and agreed that it is more appropriate to use a photo of an NGEC locomotive or passenger rail car used in the US.

Dave Warner reached out to IDOT for some photos of the Charger and rail cars and Steve Hewitt confirmed with John Oimoen and Jennifer Bastian permission to use them. The photos were provided to FASC last week along with today's meeting materials.

After some discussion, it was agreed by those on the call today that it was more appropriate to use a photo of either the Charger or passenger cars that are to be used in the US rather than VIA Rail. Members are asked to review the Midwest states pictures provided by IDOT and provide their thoughts on which one should be used for the front page.

The IDOT pictures were taken by Art Peterson and will be credited to him. (Photo(s) by Art Peterson).

Since there was not a quorum present on this call, no formal action was taken, but Tim Ziethen will apprise the Executive Board of these recommendations and request input.

- Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA

All reports this year have been submitted on time. The next report will be for the period ending 12-31-21 and will be due to FRA on 1-31-22.

- Developing a plan to increase NGEC awareness:

Follow ups on developing a plan to increase NGEC awareness as of 11-30-21:

Tim Ziethen has a request in to Amtrak's Associate General Counsel and has had some conversations regarding what the NGEC is allowed to do per its statute and By-Laws in promoting the accomplishments of the Committee. Can it issue press releases to industry publications? Is it ok to attend trade shows or other such activities to promote the work of the NGEC? In general, what is ok for the NGEC to do to raise awareness.

Tim asked Steve Hewitt who was involved with the NGEC from Amtrak Legal in the past who may be best to talk with regarding the NGEC's ability to do such outreach activities. Steve noted that Vincent Brotski was the Amtrak Legal representative most involved with the NGEC over the years. Tim will reach out to Vincent.

Tim Ziethen asked FASC members to continue to think of activities/venues to raise the NGEC awareness and to "funnel" in ideas and/or recommendations to Steve Hewitt prior to the next FASC call – 12-8-21.

NGEC Specification Review Panel(s):

For each PRIIA NGEC specification a Review Panel has been established to compare the specification (as developed by the technical subcommittee) against a Requirements document previously adopted by the Executive Board. As the Review Panel completes its work, it prepares a report with recommendations. This report is submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration. Once accepted by the Board, the specification is subsequently formally adopted by the Executive Board. As part of the Document Control process, any proposed revisions to a PRIIA NGEC specification must go through the Review Panel process as well. At such times, the Review Panel, previously established for a specification, is re-convened by the Executive Board chair.

As of 11-30-21 – the DMU Review Panel has received the summaries of changes to the DMU specification as approved by the Technical subcommittee on 10-28-21. Consultant Larry Salci expects to complete his DRAFT Review Panel Report with Recommendations by Friday 12-3-21. The Panel is scheduled to meet to consider the report for approval on 12-7-21.

Additionally, the PRIIA Trainset Specification re-write is ready to go to the Technical subcommittee for its review and should be brought up for discussion on the 12-9-21 call.