



## Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)

Monthly Activities Report: June 30, 2015

Submitted by: Steven J Hewitt, Manager, S305 NGEC Support Services

### 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, taking into account 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: Eric Curtit, Missouri DOT**

**Vice Chair: Mario Bergeron, Amtrak**

**Secretary: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT**

**Treasurer: Darrell Smith, Amtrak**

### **The Executive Board holds bi-weekly conference calls – Tuesday's at 11:30am Eastern**

During the month of June, 2015, the Executive Board met twice –via conference call - on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Key decisions and action items from the month of June, 2015 included:

- Mid-west States – Section 6 progress report: The RFP for a fleet manager is now under IDOT legal review. This is the last step in the approval process. The RFP for a fleet maintainer is under development by Michigan DOT. The states are meeting on a monthly basis with task forces working on specific issues as well.
- On June 8, 2015, the PRIIA NGEC no-cost Grant Agreement extension through 9-30-2017 (Amendment #5) was formally executed, and on June 11, 2015, via electronic vote, the Executive Board approved the following motion with regard to extending existing contracts through the life of the grant agreement amendment #5 (9-30-17):

*“As was intended in past NGENC budget approvals and to ensure compliance with the Audit of Grant Agreement of March 27, 2013, and the NGENC’s updated Procedure of Establishing Contract Support adopted August 6, 2013, the NGENC authorizes Amtrak to contract with AASHTO for administrative support services as well as subsequent sub-contracts per the statement of work for entities such as; with Hewitt Consulting for Manager of Support Services, and with SalciConsult for Specification Consultant services. In addition, the Federal Railroad Administration’s June 8th, 2015, approval of the NGENC’s Supplemental Statement of Work and related budget extension through September 30, 2017, Amtrak is authorized to extend its agreement with AASHTO and AASHTO’s sub-consultants in accordance with the Statement of Work.”*

- Host Railroad Blessing of NGENC equipment: AAR has created a committee to address potential issues related to the introduction into service of NGENC equipment from the AAR side. Jeff Gordo, FRA, has coordinated the effort on behalf of the NGENC, and representatives from Amtrak, FRA and Washington State, Illinois and Caltrans will participate. Jeff will provide updates on the progress through the Technical subcommittee on its calls on a monthly basis.
- The Finance and Administrative subcommittee continues to look at potential funding options and organizational structures to carry out those options. The subcommittee will make its recommendations to the Executive Board for its consideration in October, 2015.

On June 10, 2015, the FASC accepted the recommendations of the Funding Options task force and will proceed to develop recommendations to take forward to the Executive Board. With acceptance of its recommendations - the task force’s work was considered complete.

- The updated “backgrounder” educational document remains available upon request. Please contact Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com) with the number of copies requested and a mailing address.
- Industry requests for the Amtrak CIP: It was agreed that the CIP was intended to be a public document and it has been posted to the website and distributed to those who specifically requested it.
- On June 23, 2015, Chairman Curtit formally re-convened the Bi-Level Car Specification Review Panel for the purpose of reviewing and providing a recommendation to the Executive Board with regard to the Bi-Level Car Weight changes Urgent DCR as approved by the Technical subcommittee. It is expected that the Panel will meet and make its recommendations to the Board in July, 2015.

#### **Technical Subcommittee:**

**Chair: Mario Bergeron, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Dale Engelhardt, Amtrak**

#### **The Technical subcommittee holds bi-weekly conference calls on Thursday’s at 3:00pm Eastern**

During the month of June, 2015, the Technical subcommittee met twice, via conference call, on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Key decisions and action items for the month of June, 2015 included:

- RVAAC: The RVAAC met in June in DC to finalize the report that will ultimately go to the US Access Board in July, 2015. The meeting was straight forward with the committee looking at the same issues that have been at the forefront in previous updates.
- Accessibility Working Group Update: Oregon State University is looking at restroom access – primarily the radius turning circle. There may be more optimum options such as the T-shape etc. FRA and OSU are looking at these potential options and hope to get back to the RVAAC with their findings shortly.
- Backgrounder educational document: The updated Backgrounder is available upon request. Please contact Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com) if you want to receive Backgrounders. Provide the quantity requested and an address for sending them to.

- DEF Working Group: The working group continues to meet regularly. They are reviewing a proposed timeline for the equipment deployment. The next meeting is scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup> and Jennifer Bastian expects to have an update for the subcommittee on its next call., and will provide a project schedule as well.

- Document Control update as of June 18, 2015:

The urgent weight change DCR has been approved by the voting members of the technical subcommittee and is now waiting for the executive board to vote. (Steve Hewitt added that the first step is to have Chairman Curtit re-convene the Bi-Level Review Panel and ask Consultant Larry Salci to prepare a memorandum with recommendations for the Panel to consider – action on this should kick off on next week's Executive Board call)

The initial draft version of the Dual mode locomotive specification has been issued for comments from the technical subcommittee members.

The Digital Train Line Software specification initial draft has been sent to the DTL subcommittee for comments and further development.

- Progress Report : Dual Mode Locomotive (DC 3<sup>rd</sup> Rail) Specification development as of June 18, 2015:

The face to face meeting to approve the specification is set for August 19<sup>th</sup> in Albany, NY at NYSDOT on 50 Wolf Rd. A tour of the Amtrak Rennselear Maintenance facility will take place on August 20 (AM).

Steve Hewitt has sent a calendar notice to subcommittee members for these dates, and has contacted Andrea Ryan, AASHTO to begin making hotel and other logistical arrangements.

- Diesel-Electric procurement – progress report:

The following update report was provided by IDOT on June 18, 2015:

- The payment of invoice for milestone G is being processed by IDOT.*
- FDR follow-up action items are being processed for closure.*
- The list and schedule for First Article Inspections (FAI) is being coordinated with Siemens and the JPEs.*
- Manufacturing for the first locomotive carbody has begun.*
- The last two of the RFCs will be received shortly. Fourteen draft (DCRs) are being prepared and Rich Stegner has contacted Tammy Krause, to coordinate processing.*
- The JPEs, FRA and AAR (host RRs and Amtrak) met on 6/4/2015 and 6/5/2015 for guidelines for vehicle qualification testing.*
- The next meeting for the diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) review and application team is scheduled for 6/29/2015.*
- The locomotive weight has increased slightly to near 271,000 lbs (+/-) but the calculated P2 force is still within specified limits. Weight is being closely monitored."*

Bi-Level Car Procurement Update:

- On June 18th Momoko Tamaoki, Caltrans, provided a brief update on the bi-level car procurement:

FAI process continues – looking to complete by July 7<sup>th</sup>

Design Review hot items remaining to be closed = about 24 or so. They have a target to close these remaining items out by the end of June, 2015.

No RVCs were approved this past week – 2 are under review and responses on them are due next week.

The weight change DCR is going through the document control process as noted earlier.

California, IDOT and FRA held QA meetings in Rochelle, Illinois on June 10<sup>th</sup>. They are working to mitigate car shell issues.

- AAR Committee: Has been established to discuss the introduction of new passenger equipment and coordination with host Railroads. The kickoff meeting took place on June 4<sup>th</sup>, in DC, with 28 attendees. 5 subgroups have been appointed. Jeff Gordon will provide a status update report to the Technical subcommittee once a month (every other call). Next update due July 16, 2015.

#### **The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee**

**Chair: Darrell Smith, Amtrak CFO**

**Vice Chair: Brent Thompson, Washington State DOT**

**Vice Chair: Ray Hessinger, New York State DOT**

**The Finance and Administrative subcommittee holds a conference call every four weeks on Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern.**

During the Month of June, 2015, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on June 10<sup>th</sup>:

- Executing the Amended Grant Agreement for a no cost extension through 9-30-17: On the June 9<sup>th</sup> call of the NGEC Executive Board, Chairman Curtit reported that Grant Agreement Amendment #5 through federal fiscal year 2017 (9-30-17) was signed by FRA, and thus, formally executed on June 8, 2015.
- Extending existing contracts: With the FRA having signed the Grant Agreement Amendment #5, thus executing the amended agreement through 9-30-17, the NGEC can move forward in accordance with the SOW and budget approved previously. In compliance with the SOW and Budget, and in compliance with the OIG Audit, it is necessary for the FASC and the Executive Board (upon recommendation from the FASC) to approve a motion to extend the existing contracts including AASHTO's, Hewitt Consulting and SalciConsult.

Following the action taken after the last grant agreement amendment, Darrell Smith called for a motion to approve the following:

The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee recommends that the NGEC Executive Board approve the following:

*"As was intended in past NGEC budget approvals and to ensure compliance with the Audit of Grant Agreement of March 27, 2013, and the NGEC's updated Procedure of Establishing Contract Support adopted August 6, 2013, the NGEC authorizes Amtrak to contract with AASHTO for administrative support services as well as subsequent sub-contracts per the statement of work for entities such as; with Hewitt Consulting for Manager of Support Services, and with SalciConsult for Specification Consultant services. In addition, the Federal Railroad Administration's June 8th, 2015, approval of the NGEC's Supplemental Statement of Work and related budget extension through September 30, 2017, Amtrak is authorized to extend its agreement with AASHTO and AASHTO's sub-consultants in accordance with the Statement of Work."*

The motion was approved with all members present voting in favor. It was subsequently submitted to the Executive Board with a request that it take up the motion electronically with a deadline for voting set for COB on Monday, June 15, 2015.

- Looking into the availability of FRA R&D funds for the NGEC: Jeff Gordon looked into the possible availability of R&D funds for the NGEC and provided this update. The answer to this question is "generally no".

In order for FRA Research and Development to dispense grant funds the following is necessary: The applicant must demonstrate a clear link to safety. As the NGEC does not directly provide safety benefits it is not likely that it would qualify for an R&D grant.

The FRA R&D program goes through a ranking process with an elaborate decision model. The applicant would need to receive a rank equal to or higher than a project within the same area. This would be somewhat possible for the NGEC – but not probable.

- Funding Options Task Force activities: The task force completed its work and provided a report with recommendations to the full subcommittee. On June 10, 2015, the FASC accepted the report and recommendations with all members present voting in the affirmative.

One item called for a request that the Executive Board adopt the revised specification utilization report form as developed by the task force. Steve Hewitt will send the revised form to the executive Board for consideration on its next call – 6-23-15. It was accepted and has been posted to the NGEC website.

- Developing educational documents for getting the message out: Steve Hewitt will prepare an outline for the next version of the Backgrounder – to be a look ahead – Foregrounder.

Steve will also begin developing a potential progress report to Congress to go from the NGEC Chair.

It was agreed that a working group be established to consider and review potential efforts to educate the Hill. The group will be comprised of Governmental or Legislative affairs “types” from the states and from Amtrak and FRA, and it was agreed that FRA and Amtrak staff familiar with the federal budget process be asked to participate.

Members on the call agreed to submit names and contact information for potential working group participation from their agency, and FRA and Amtrak should also submit names of potential participants with knowledge of the federal budget process.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, agreed to provide to Darrell Smith a list of state representatives from the policy/governmental affairs side that he is familiar with.

Ultimately, it was agreed that names and contact information should be provided to Darrell Smith, with a cc to Steve Hewitt, by COB on June 25, 2015; and the subcommittee would endeavor to establish a working group on the July 1, 2015 FASC call.

- Obtaining data in regard to potential/future acquisition needs: FRA has prepared “a back of the envelope” look at “the best sense of what the needs might be”. It was emphasized that this is not a well vetted body of work. The information was provided by Beth Nachreiner and distributed to FASC members for discussion on the July 1, 2015 FASC call.
- Eric Curtit will prepare a draft “white paper/memo” for FASC review in regard to taking a closer look at the concept proposal for establishing the NGEC as a subsidiary of Amtrak for matters related to Fleets. Eric will have a draft memo ready for distribution to FASC members in advance of the next call – 7-1-15.
- On the next call, the FASC will begin developing a potential scope for seeking outside professional expertise to help the FASC to understand what is needed organizationally and to help with the mechanics of accepting fees, etc.

#### **The 514 Subcommittee:**

**Chair: Ron Pate, Washington State DOT**

**The 514 Subcommittee holds bi-weekly conference calls on Mondays at 4:00PM Eastern.**

During the month of June, 2015, the following updates were provided to the Executive Board:

- Progress continues in a positive direction. The subcommittee is currently working on the reconciliation items.
- They are also beginning to look at inward cameras as related to capital equipment, and have reached out to Amtrak to see if they are seeking federal funds for these items, and, if so, “asking how the states can help with the ask. 514 Chairman Ron Pate sees this as a good opportunity to work together.

- Amtrak has taken the 7.36 percent GNA off the table and members are looking at all GNA costs. Ron called this another good sign of working together and an opportunity to work through the new governance structure and termed it as a chance to be a win-win for all concerned.
- Overall, there is "continued positive progress" with Amtrak and the states sharing information and working together as partners and in support of each other.

**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 particular specification is re-convened by the Executive Board chair.**

On June 23, 2015, the Bi-Level Review Panel was re-convened by Chairman Eric Curtit for the purpose of reviewing and providing a recommendation to the Board on the Bi-level car weight change Urgent DCR as previously approved by the Technical subcommittee. A recommendation to the Board is expected to occur in July, 2015.