For #3: FRA Long-Distance Service Study Newsletter - raillabornews@gmail.com - Gmail

Thank you for your interest in the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) . We are providing this update to individuals that have previously expressed interest in the study.

Long-distance routes are passenger rail routes of more than 750 miles, operated by Amtrak. Amtrak currently operates 15 long-distance routes; 13 routes provide daily service, and two routes—the Cardinal and Sunset Limited—operate three days per week.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the) directed FRA to conduct a study to evaluate the restoration of daily intercity passenger rail service along discontinued Amtrak long-distance routes and Amtrak long-distance routes that occur on a non-daily basis. The study

may also evaluate potential new Amtrak long-distance routes. This study will take into consideration how new routes could link and serve large and small communities as part of a regional rail network, advance the economic and social well-being of rural areas, provide enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system, and reflect public engagement and local and regional support for restored passenger rail service.

We anticipate the Long-Distance Service Study will conclude in 2024.



Existing Amtrak passenger rail network. Amtrak currently operates 15 long-distance routes.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

We are committed to frequent and transparent communications with stakeholders, members of the public, and interested parties. Since launching the study in 2022, we have consulted with Amtrak, state and local governments, regional planning organizations, host railroads, organizations representing onboard Amtrak employees, nonprofit organizations representing Amtrak passengers, relevant regional passenger rail authorities, federally recognized tribes, and community members.

To date, we have held 12 regional working group meetings across the United States, gathered critical feedback, and connected with more than 250 stakeholder organizations. Our engagement process has resulted in almost 5,000 comments, received at meetings, via email, and through the study website. The presentation materials and meeting summaries can be found on our website. We appreciate all of your submitted comments. We are considering this input as we work to develop potential routes.



The Southwest Regional Working Group meeting in July 2023

ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Since our July series of regional working group meetings, the study team has been actively analyzing the segments identified as part of the "Enhanced Network" to develop potential restored, enhanced, or new long-distance routes. This analysis considers how those potential routes could:

- Link and serve large and small communities as part of a regional rail network
- Advance the economic and social well-being of rural areas throughout the United States
- Provide enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system

- Reflect public engagement and local and regional support of restored passenger rail service

From this analysis, and the application of evaluation criteria, a list of potential restored, enhanced, or new long-distance routes is being developed. This list will be presented at the next series of regional working group meetings in February 2024, and also posted on our website after the meetings have concluded.

FUTURE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

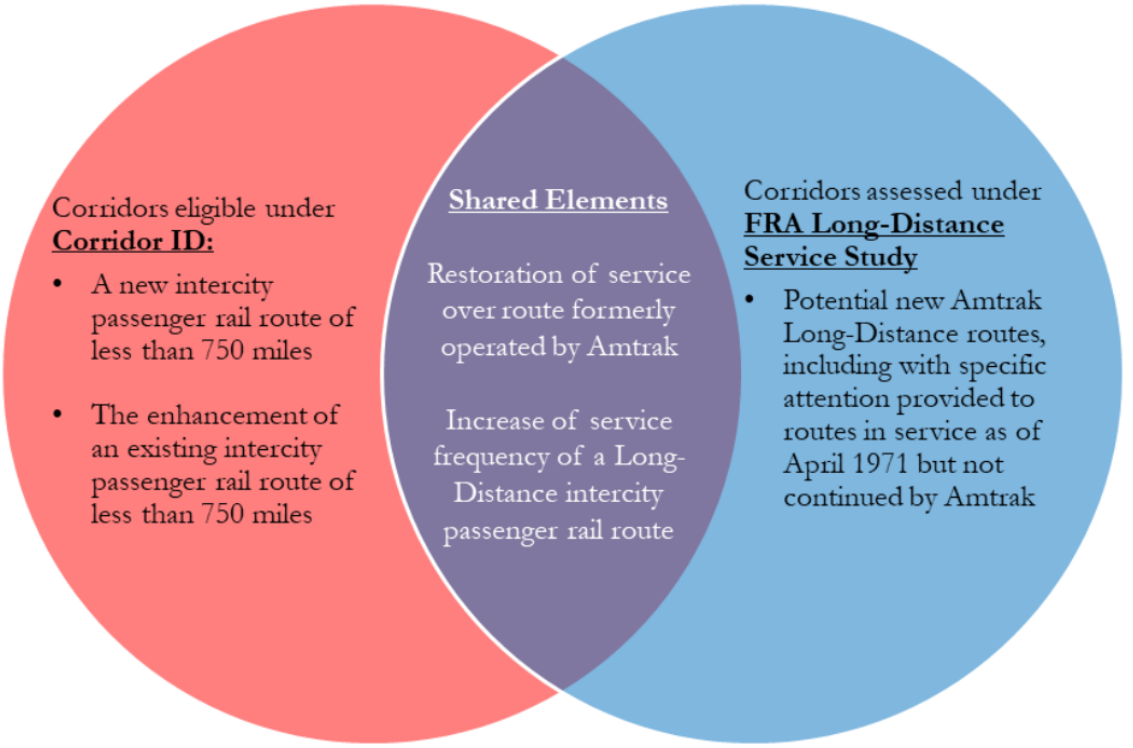
In February 2024, the study team will hold its third series of regional working group meetings to review potential routes. We anticipate sharing the study's final recommendations with working group members and broader community next summer.

CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRA recently announced 69 corridor selections across 44 states through the Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID). The Corridor ID Program is a comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning and development program that will help guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the country and

create a pipeline of intercity passenger rail projects ready for implementation.

Corridor selections include daily service on two long-distance routes that currently operate three days per week – the Cardinal and Sunset Limited – as well as restored service along the discontinued North Coast Hiawatha. More information on selected corridors is available on the FRA website.



The Long-Distance Service Study is evaluating restoration of daily intercity rail passenger service along discontinued Amtrak long-distance routes, Amtrak long-distance routes that occur on a non-daily basis, as well as potential new

Amtrak long-distance routes. The first two route types – discontinued Amtrak long-distance routes, and Amtrak long-distance routes that occur on a non-daily basis – are eligible corridors under the Corridor ID program.

FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP FOR INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Additionally, FRA recently announced selections for the Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (Fed-State National) Program. This program will fund capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve performance, or expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service for projects not located on the Northeast Corridor.

Selected projects include rail infrastructure improvements on tracks in Malta, MT, where the Empire Builder provides long-distance service, as well as the advancement of two new high-speed rail corridors, and improvements to existing rail corridors for expanded service and performance. More information on selected corridors is available on the FRA website.

STAY ENGAGED

Your ongoing engagement is important in our efforts to evaluate restored, enhanced, and new long-distance routes. To review meeting materials from any of our regional working group meetings, please visit our website. You can also reach us via email at contactus@fralongdistancerailstudy.org.

Sincerely,

FRA Long-Distance Service Study Team