



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: January 31, 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 January 2021, the Executive Board met twice, via web conference, on the 12th and the 26th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of January 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 NGEC technical subcommittee informed as the process is completed.

As reported to the Technical subcommittee on 10-1-20, the Access Board review is currently in a holding pattern. As of 12-31-20 – this pattern continues.

As of 1-31-21 – this holding pattern continues.

- Executive Board review of NGEC documents to ensure there are no holes in the NGEC portfolio of specifications and other documents.

Development of a TSSSA template/primer:

In April it was agreed that developing a TSSSA template/menu of potential options would be undertaken by the Technical subcommittee.

As expressed by Chairman Hessinger, the intent is to have an "a la carte" menu of options when considering a TSSSA as a part of the procurement process.

Once the DRAFT is prepared, it will be provided to Tammy Krause to get it ready to be included as an NGEC document for Technical subcommittee approval and, ultimately for Executive Board review and approval.

As of 10-30-20 - progress has slowed due to the many changes that have taken place at Amtrak. On 10-1-20, Technical subcommittee Chair, George Hull reported to the subcommittee that there were no updates on the progress of this activity.

As of 12-31-20 there has been no new activity on this item.

On January, Technical subcommittee chair reported that he planned to provide a DRAFT to the subcommittee on its call on 2-4-21.

- Treasurer's Report – 1-26-21t:

Balance/Spend Rate:

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

Amount Spent: \$681,532.36.

Balance remaining: \$ 568,467.64.

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23) - \$486,808.83.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating) - \$13,908.82.

- Updating NGEC two-pager:

Proposed updates to the NGEC two-pager were approved by the Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) on 12-9-20:

The NGEC two-pager for 2021 has been approved as a final DRAFT and is with MODOT Graphics Arts being finalized for distribution by the NGEC Virtual Annual Meeting.

- Annual By-Laws Review

On 11-17-20, the NGEC Executive Board adopted the proposed changes to the By-Laws, with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Following the adoption of the changes – Steve Hewitt finalized the document and provided it to all Executive Board members and to AASHTO for posting on the NGEC website.

This task is complete. Next review will take place in the Fall of 2021.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 1-26-21:

“Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Car structure FDR is complete and the structural test plans are being coordinated with Caltrans, Siemens, and FRA. IDOT Café Car releases are ongoing and the Electrical FDR occurred on December 15. The Galley FDR is expected to be completed by the end of January. The new emergency egress windows are being installed on cars in California and Illinois. Cab Car Clearance, Lighting and Electrical FDR meetings occurred January 7 and 8.

The Maintainability Demonstration resumes this week in Stockton. IDOT Business Class table testing is tentative for February 9 in Spain. NEC testing for standard coach is complete and the report is accepted by FRA. Caltrans 238.111 testing is complete, and the report has been submitted to Amtrak. The IDOT 238.111 test runs are scheduled for the week of January 25th.

65 cars total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. There are currently twelve Caltrans cars at the Stockton Facility and eighteen IDOT cars in Chicago.”

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Update as of 12-15-20:

On 12-15-20, Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, reported that the MTA Board was meeting to consider awarding a contract to Siemens Mobility for a base order of 19 dual mode locomotives with options for a total of 152 for Metro-North, Long Island Railroad, NYSDOT and Connecticut DOT. The base order cost is at \$12.2 million each and the option orders will be at \$10.3 million each.

Ray noted that Siemens Mobility was the only bidder. Two other companies had submitted pre-qualification documents but, in the end, decided not to submit bids.

As of 1-26-21 the MTA Board had approved the awarding of a contract between Metro-North and Siemens Mobility for the production of the Dual Mode Locomotive.

Metro-North and Siemens were in the process of executing the contract.

Metro North agreed to give a presentation on the procurement during the NGEAC Annual Meeting and has confirmed that Dwight Sowden will be the speaker.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 1-26-21:

CAF Sleeper cars – two more have been delivered – that leaves 9 left.

Long-Distance Locomotive – on track with the first one anticipated to ship in March 2021.

Amfleet replacement – this procurement is progressing and is in the “cone of silence” stage.

AE21 – is in testing on the Northeast Corridor and a TTCI.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car RFP as of 1-26-21:

Proposals were received (11-2-20) and CtDOT is in the process of reviewing them under the “cone of silence”.

On 1-12-21, Steve Hewitt reached out to Marci Petterson, Connecticut DOT, to determine if she would be able to give an update at the NGEAC Annual Meeting. Marci reported that they will likely still be in the “cone of silence” and unable to say anything. She stated that she will attend the meeting and would offer an update if there was one to give but would not be a formal presenter at this time.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

On 10-20-20, Ron Bartels, VIA Rail, provided the NGEAC Executive Board with an update on the VIA Rail vehicle procurement program.

He gave an overview of an exciting program that will result in 32 trainsets - each with 1 locomotive, 4 coaches and a cab car. Ron provided a general overview of milestones and an anticipated timeline for delivery.

He also described the great level of progress that has taken place, even with a tight schedule and the challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic.

In December, Steve Hewitt extended an invitation, which was accepted by Mario Bergeron, for VIA Rail to give an update presentation during the NGEC Virtual Annual Meeting on 2-23-21.

In January, Steve Hewitt reported that he had confirmed with Mario Bergeron that VIA rail will give a presentation at the Annual Meeting. Presenters will be a combination of Mario Bergeron, Ron Bartels, and Joe Di Liello.

- Document Control Update - as of 1-26-21:

Tammy Krause provided the following update on 1-26-21:

1. *The Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices document was sent to the WG for final review and comments are due back to me by tomorrow. I have received 3 sets of comments so far.*
2. *Stadler Rail had requested a delay in the DMU to allow them to submit comments. I have received the first group of comments and the second group are due 2/10/2021.*
3. *The PRIIA specifications all reference the APTA PRESS Standards. For the past several years, APTA has been working on reviewing and updating all the specifications. They have also created many new ones. I am working with Paul Jamieson on changes to the PRIIA specs based on these. This will include making changes to Chapter 2 and 18 (References and Materials & Workmanship). In addition, ECP brakes now has standards which will require some changes to the Brakes chapters. I have also asked Paul Jamieson to send me the proposed changes based upon the APTA specifications by February 10th – the same as the date for the Stadler submittals.*

On 1-26-21, Steve Hewitt asked Tammy to complete the list of technical working group members as he is preparing an NGEC Roster to be included in the meeting materials for the Annual meeting.

Tammy agreed to provide the list in time to include as a part of the NGEC Roster for the Annual Meeting packet.

- METRA Equipment Procurement Effort:

As of 4-9-19, an RFP was on the street for 200-400 bi-level cars. They were going through the process now. Interested parties were to respond by August 2019.

METRA has the NGEC specification, but it was unknown if the plan to use it or if they will be in contact with the NGEC or not.

John Oimoen, IDOT, is scheduled to provide an update on this procurement to the Executive Board in a future Board call.

- Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the Annual meeting and were included in the minutes. Presentations were distributed and posted to the website.

Next Update – NGEC Virtual Annual Meeting 2-23-21.

- NGEC Annual Meeting – 2021:

As of 1-26-21, the Annual Meeting Agenda is in Final DRAFT form. It has been distributed as DRAFT. All speakers have been confirmed, and 79 members of the NGEC have registered to attend.

The meeting will be held on 2-23-21 “virtually” from 11:30am-2:00pm Eastern.

- **Determining the status of Michigan Membership on The NGEC Executive Board and/or as a member of the Committee, in general**

This item remains on hold as a new Rail Director for Michigan (Peter Anastor) was only named recently and it was determined that outreach would wait until he has had a chance to get settled in.

The intent is to have this resolved in advance of the Annual Meeting.

John Oimoen, IDOT, noted that the Mid-West states were meeting on 1-27-21 and will be introduced to the new Michigan DOT Rail Director and he will try to get information on their interest in resuming involvement in the NGEC.

- **FRA Request for list of NGEC Executive Board votes taken in 2020:**

The FRA – week of 1-25-21 - requested a list of all NGEC Executive Board votes taken in 2020.

On 1-28-21, Steve Hewitt provided a list of key decisions/actions taken by the Board in 2020 (after a review by Chairman Hessinger) and submitted it to Mike Murray, FRA.

Noted in the submittal is the fact that the Board operates on consensus and few formal votes are taken, but many decisions/actions are taken throughout the year to keep the workflow moving and to continuously monitor the work of the standing subcommittees and technical working groups.

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

During the month of January 2021, the Technical subcommittee met twice, via conference call, on the 7th and the 21st.

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of January 2021, included:

- Backgrounder educational document:

The current NGEC two-page background document remains available in hard copy and/or in a PDF version. Copies can be obtained by sending a request to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com

The Executive Board has approved proposed updates as presented by the NGEC FASC. The document is being finalized by MODOT graphic arts and is scheduled for release by the NGEC Annual meeting – 2-23-21.

- AWG/RVACC:

Technical subcommittee review of Access Board advance NPRM Accessibility Guidelines and compare with current NGEC Specifications

The intent of this effort is for states to submit their comments to the Access Board Docket on the Accessibility Requirement Guidelines (advanced) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Amtrak has submitted its comments already. Once the comments “have come back”, the Technical subcommittee will compare them with the NGEC specifications to ensure compliance.

On 5-28-20, Melissa Shurland, FRA, informed Steve Hewitt that The US Access Board extended the comment period for Recommendations on Access for Rail Vehicles until July 14, 2020.

The comment period deadline has passed. Melissa Shurland reported on 8-20-20 that the Access Board is reviewing the comments received. She will keep the Tech subcommittee apprised as this effort progresses.

As noted in the Executive Board section of this report – as of 1-31-21 – the Access Board appears to continue to be in a holding pattern on this review.

- Document Control Update:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

Procurement Updates:

- Multi-State Car Procurement - Caltrans (Lead State): Progress reports from the lead state on the PRIIA multi-state car procurement is provided on each Technical subcommittee call and each Executive Board call.

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Updates: Progress reports are provided by AMTRAK Acting CMO and NGENC Vice Chair George Hull on a regular basis.

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- METRA Equipment Procurement:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- AAR Update on the TAG Committee on LED Headlights Phase 4:

On 8-20-20, Tarek Omar noted that the LED testing is complete except for ice melting – which will need to wait a few months on. Steve Hewitt asked if he should remove this item as a regular update. It was agreed that he would take it off as a monthly standing agenda item and will make a note to check in with Tarek in December 2020.

There was nothing new reported in January 2021.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 1-7-21:

On 1-7-21, Hamid Shari-Kashani reported that progress is continuing on the current phase which is studying frequency performance issues in congested areas. The current focus is on developing a theoretical model.

For more information, please contact Hamid Sharif (hamidsharif@uni.edu)

- Update: Electronics on Trains Working Group as of 12-31-20:

The following update was provided by David Brabb on 11-12-20:

“We met on Tuesday, November 10th. We are buttoning up the DTL 305-919 Hardware spec. We discussed moving a few items from the original 920 draft to 919 because they are related more to hardware. We plan to stop the current 919 revision now and will add the firmware and the other items discussed when we are able. We are at a stopping point due to contractual issues at this time but still plan to hold our next meeting on December 15th.”

On 1-21-21, Steve Hewitt reported that the working group was meeting later that day, and Steve would ask for an update for 2-4-21.

- Update: The Passenger ECP Final Test Report:

On 11-12-20, Paul Jamieson provided the following update on the ECP Final Test Report:

“The Passenger ECP Final Test Report has been submitted to the FRA observer and docket. The docket reference is FRA-2015-0078 for all information that was formally submitted to the FRA. Draft ECP regulatory language was submitted to the FRA observer and the text will appear in a future NPRM.

NGEC technical specification’s recommended changes will be submitted separately for inclusion in future revisions. These changes will include the two performance standards APTA PR-M-S-20-17 Emulation Performance Requirements and APTA PR-M-S-21-17 ECP Passenger Performance Requirements are issued and available of the APTA website <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/standards/passenger-rail-equipment-safety-standards/> . An APTA PRESS standard to address ECP Ready requirements, as addressed in the NGEC technical specification, will be issued as APTA PR-M-030-21, and is in final publication preparation.

APTA will be issuing a standard to address passenger vehicle piping requirements. This standard will be APTA PR-M-S-029-21 and is in final publication preparation.”

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact Paul at:

Paul E Jamieson, PE Retired
Mobile: 18643236956
jamiespe@outlook.com

Paul also recommended that the NGEC, as one of the project sponsors, may want to post this report on the website.

Steve Hewitt provided the link to AASHTO and asked that the report be posted on the Technical subcommittee section of the NGEC website.

- Working Group on Specification Wright Issues:

In January 2021, a technical working group was established within the technical subcommittee to work on specification issues related to weight. Jeff Gordon, FRA, agreed to lead the team.

As of 1-21-21, the group had met twice.

There are 17 members as of 1-21-21 with new members continuing to volunteer to participate. It is a popular working group and Jeff Gordon is pleased with the interest shown.

As assigned during the first meeting, car builders had taken one or more of the PRIIA specification to review the weight section and report back. Bombardier gave a presentation on the bi-level specification and provided recommendations for changes. The working group will look at those recommendations and see if they may also apply to the other PRIIA specs.

The working group received a brief report from Stadler on the DMU specification. They provided preliminary information and will present new information on the next call.

The next meeting has not yet been scheduled. Jeff sends out a Google poll with 8-10 dates and picks the date that works for the most working group members.

Jeff Gordon will provide a presentation on the activities of the working group during the NGEN Annual Meeting.

- PRIIA use of APTA PRESS Standards "Announcement":

In the absence of Dave Warner who was having technical difficulties with the connection, Steve Hewitt read into the record the following provided in advance by "Emeritus" Dave:

All PRIIA specifications incorporate by reference the APTA PRESS Standards and Recommended Practices. This reliance on industry-wide documentation helped the Technical Subcommittee develop standard specifications. In the past few years, the PRESS Committees have made significant progress in updating (and catching up with) standards and recommended practices. The purpose of this "public service announcement" is to remind the working groups to periodically review the current revisions available on the APTA Standards web page. No action beyond reading is necessarily required. PRIIA people are involved in the PRESS effort, and two of them, Tammy Krause and Emeritus Dave, lead the Electrical and Mechanical Working Groups, respectively."

Paul Jamieson added that there are some new standards and as they come out, they will be reviewed and added to the specifications at the appropriate time. Paul also suggested that agencies procuring equipment look at the APTA standards – they are on the APTA website – to see if they would be beneficial.

The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee

Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Brent Thompson, Washington State 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 January 2021, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on the 6th.

- Treasurer's Report as of 1-26-21:

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

Amount Spent: \$681,532.36.

Balance remaining: \$ 568,467.64.

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23) - \$486,808.83.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating) - \$13,908.82.

- Conveying the Message (1-31-21):

Congress extended the FAST Act for one year and that extension includes the NGEN. It remains to be seen, when the next Congress will take up reauthorization of the Fast Act in the next session.

Prior action taken by other organizations with regard to NGEN organizations in the bill prepared by the House in the current Congress:

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), which earlier informed House and Senate members of its' support for reauthorizing the NGEN by including it in its authorizing principles, submitted a letter further expressing its support for reauthorizing the NGEN and provided proposed language including scope and funding. (The SPRC request included an authorization for \$2.5 million over the life of the bill).

Tim Ziethen, Amtrak contacted Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs, to ensure that this continues to be a part of Amtrak's reauthorization requests. Ken confirmed that they included it and would continue to do so.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, confirmed that NGEN reauthorization was included in its authorization request and he agreed that it is helpful to make the request to Senate Commerce and to also send the request to the

House T&I Committee. He also noted that it was likely left out of the House bill simply because it was missed rather than intentionally left out.

With the new Congress in place, efforts to provide educational material to SPRC and others will be made once again.

- Updating the NGEC two-pager for 2021:

The 2021 version of the two-page educational document is being finalized by MODOT Graphics Arts and should be available by the NGEC Annual Meeting.

- Status Update as of 1-31-21 - NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

The Equipment Acquisition and Ownership working group had completed its review of what was Revision 6 of the DRAFT Recommended Practice Document 305-200, and an electronic vote took place on 2-1-21.

Note: The working group approved Revision 6 for submittal to the NGEC Executive Board. The intent is to discuss it on the Board meeting on 2-9-21 and consider it for adoption during the Annual meeting 2-23-21.

- **Quarterly Grant Progress Report:**

The quarterly report for the period ending 12-31-20 was submitted on time to FRA on 1-29-21.

Next report due: April 30, 2021.

- **Annual Review of NGEC By-Law:**

Task complete – next review – Fall 2021.

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.

The Trainset Specification Review Panel met on October 17, 2019 and approved the Trainset Specification 305-007 Revision B Review Panel Report and recommendations as presented by consultant Larry Salci. On 10-22-19, the NGEC Executive Board accepted the Review Panel's Report and Recommendation and formally adopted PRIIA Single Level Trainset Specification 305-007 Revision B.

In October 2020, NGEC Executive Board Chairman, Ray Hessinger re-convened the DMU Specification Review Panel and tasked Technical consultant Larry Salci with reviewing the changes approved by the Technical subcommittee on 10-15-20 and preparing a Review Panel report with recommendations.

As of 11-30-20, additional comments submitted on weight, by the mechanical working group have not yet been adjudicated. Industry members from Stadler (builders of DMUs) have come in late to the process and requested time to develop and submit more changes through the NGEC DCR process. As noted above, Mr. Salci emphasized that any changes requested by Stadler must be FRA compliant. As of 11-30-20, the Stadler comments have not been submitted and they have requested and were provided more time to develop those comments internally before submitting through the NGEC Document Control process as DCRs. The timeline for consideration of the additional DCRs by the Technical subcommittee is now anticipated to be sometime in January 2021. The view is that it is better to get it right than rushed.

Additionally, the broader issue of weight across the vehicle procurements will likely be taken up by a working group being established to look at that issue and report back to the NGEN technical subcommittee with recommendations. Establishing the working group will be on the 11-10-20 Technical subcommittee agenda.

As reported earlier in this document, a technical working group on equipment weight was established under the jurisdiction of the NGEN Technical subcommittee on 12-20-20 and is led by Jeff Gordon, FRA.

As of 1-31-21, the DMU specification update Revision B was on hold pending the Stadler DCRs.