



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: July 31, 2020

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, 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: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT

Vice Chair: Charles King, 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 July 2020, the Executive Board met once, via conference call, on the 14th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of July 2020 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.

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

On the 16th and the 30th, members were reminded by Steve Hewitt that any comments they wished to submit to the docket were due by July 14th.

<https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/transportation/vehicles/update-of-the-guidelines-for-transportation-vehicles/advance-notice-of-proposed-rulemaking-2>

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

Chairman Hessinger noted that the Acquisition and Ownership report will be the first completely new document prepared by the NGEN in several years. This year, he will ask the Executive Board to consider whether there are any holes in our portfolio of specifications and other documents and if so, to begin the development of any such specification, guidance document or report.

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

On 5-19-20, Charlie King, Technical subcommittee Chair, reported that progress has been made in developing a TSSSA template/primer which will be brought first to the Technical subcommittee and then, once approved, to the Executive Board. He has recently received OEM approval to use on one of the Diagrams that had been jointly developed by Amtrak and the OEM. Amtrak is now drafting the explanation.

Charlie reiterated that the intent, as expressed by Chairman Hessinger, 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 NGEN document for Technical subcommittee approval and, ultimately for Executive Board review and approval.

As of 7-31-20 - progress continued in the development of the TSSSA primer/template. It is anticipated that the DRAFT document will be completed within the next couple of months.

Treasurer's Report – provided on 7-22-20 to the FASC:

- Treasurer's update as of 7-22-20:

Balance/Spend Rate:

Through May 2020

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

Amount Spent: \$620,692.48

Balance remaining: \$ 629,307.52

Anticipated spending through the remainder of the current grant period: approximately \$76,000.

Estimated balance remaining at the end of the current grant period (9-30-20): \$552,000.

Approximate current spend rate: \$14,000.

Average Monthly expenditure estimated for the extension period is: \$15,000.00

Amount utilized if the Grant is extended for 36 months at estimated spend rate: \$540,000.00

Projected total remaining at the end of the 36-month extension: \$10-20,000.

Grant Agreement extension request:

Tim Ziethen reported that Amtrak grants has gotten some feedback from FRA on the grant extension request. The most recent interaction was this week. Some suggested verbiage changes have been agreed to, and Tim understands that there is now "conceptual" agreement on the 36 month "no-cost" extension. He believes that most, if not all, reviews have been completed and they are awaiting final confirmation of approval.

As soon as gets an update, Tim will let the FASC members and the Executive Board know.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 7-23-20:

Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Car structure FDR is complete. Setup for cab car structure compression testing is tentative for August in Sacramento depending on travel restrictions. The Cab Car brake system FDR occurred on July 9th. IDOT galley FDR reviews and releases are ongoing, and the latest galley review occurred on June 16th.

Travel restrictions are being evaluated, but travel to Europe from the U.S. for testing is unlikely in the near term. Video and photos continue to be provided for tests that SMEs are unable to witness. This was successfully demonstrated using live video for Cab Car CEM testing. NEC testing is complete, and the test report has been sent to FRA and Amtrak for review. Caltrans 238.111 testing is underway this week. The IDOT 238.111 test runs on the IDOT corridors are expected to be performed in August or September.

51 cars in total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. System-level FAIs for standard coach are complete and approved with final open items in work to complete first car overall FAI. The complete car FAI for IDOT and a follow-up FRA Sample Car Inspection occurred June 24th and 25th. There are nine cars in total at the Stockton facility. Cars 11 and 12 were shipped to Stockton on June 30th. The IDOT cars are expected to begin shipments in August.

The project teams continue to monitor potential production and schedule impacts due to the coronavirus and are receiving frequent updates from SCOA and Siemens.

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Update as of 7-31-20:

On 7-14-20, Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, reported that while the procurement effort remains under the “cone of silence”, there is some “light at the end of the tunnel” as Metro-North has established a schedule to bring the effort to closure. Ray expects to have some announcements “eventually”.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 7-31-20:

On 7-14-20, Charlie King provided the following update to the Executive Board:

On the Acela:

Testing continues on Trainsets 1 and 2.

Instrumented wheels are to come off Trainset 1 in Pueblo and will go to the NEC for Trainset 2 testing.

Trainset 2 continues to be “out and about” undergoing controlled tests for access and will be taken to DC either next week or the week after.

Charlie noted that there has been close coordination with FRA throughout the process and they have been supportive.

Trainsets 3 and 4 continue to be built in Hornell.

The COVID 19 virus is having an impact on some of the material – but the plan remains for revenue service sometime in 2021.

On the Locomotives:

Seven units are in various stages of construction – with the first one being the furthest along - the car body FAI is going on this week in the Siemens factory in Sacramento.

On the Intercity Passenger Rail (ICPR) vehicles intended to replace Amfleet and others such as Washington State DOT:

Amtrak continues to evaluate bid proposals and remains under the procurement “cone of silence” as they work through the technical packages. They are hopeful for some announcements by the end of this summer.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car RFP as of 7-31-20:

The following update was provided by Marci Petterson, Connecticut DOT as an update to the Executive Board:

*RFP went public on April 30th
Pre-proposal conference held June 12th
First round of questions was due July 10th
Second round due at the end of August 2020
Anticipate awarding in January 2021
We are using a best value selection process*

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements – as of 2-21-20

At the Annual Meeting, 2-21-20, Mario Bergeron, Bob Becker and Joe Diliello provided an update on the ongoing VIA Rail equipment procurement and on overview of VIA Rail as a company.

The complete presentation was is provided as a PDF file and was not re-printed in the Minutes but is available on the website and was distributed along with other NGEC presentations.

Next update – as appropriate

- Document Control Update - as of 7-31-20:

Document Control activities recently have involved primarily the Trainset specification. Tammy Krause is working to finish the reconfiguring of the specification by the end of the month (July 2020).

- Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices/Lessons Learned reference document:

The group met on 6-25-20 to go over comments received on the most recent draft. It was a productive session with all comments addressed in one way or another. Some suggested edits will require additional rewriting to address comments made.

On 7-23-20, to the Technical subcommittee, Steve Hewitt added an update on the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Working Group’s progress on developing Recommended Practices. Based on comments received and comments previously accepted, and some new section re writes, Tammy and the technical writer will be revising the previous draft to include all updates and to recirculate to working group members. The members will be provided with the document two weeks in advance of the next call. Initially, the next call was scheduled for 7-30-20. Because the updated DRAFT has not yet been completed or distributed, Chairman Hessinger has canceled the 7-30-20 call and will reschedule it once the new DRAFT has been provided with a two-week review period.

- 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 – as appropriate

- Distribution of the NGENC two-pager – educational document as of 7-31-20:

The updated NGENC two-pager remains available in hard copy and PDF. To date over 400 hard copies and electronic copies have been distributed.

Copies are available in either version by request from Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com

Technical Subcommittee:

Chair: Charles King, Amtrak

Vice Chair: George Hull, Amtrak

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

During the month of July 2020, the Technical subcommittee met twice, via conference call, on the 9th and the 23rd.

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of July 2020, included:

- Backgrounder educational document:

The updated NGENC 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

- AWG/RVACC:

Technical subcommittee review of Access Board advance NPRM Accessibility Guidelines and compare with current NGENC 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 NGENC 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, and Melissa is being asked to provide an update on the status to the Technical subcommittee on 8-6-20.

- 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 CMO and NGENC Vice Chair, Charlie King 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 as of 6-25-20:

On 6-25-20, Tarek Omar, FRA, reported that Phase 3 and 4 are complete and they are working on the final report. Tarek hopes to be able to share the report with this group soon.

There was no new update on this item in July 2020.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 7-23 -20:

Hamid Sharif-Kashani reported that they have completed the most recent phase of the study and are preparing for the next phase which will begin in September. They will be testing a frequency that will connect car voice and data at the same time to see if this will ease some of the saturation that occurs.

Please contact Hamid if you would like more information on this effort.

For more information, please contact Hamid Sharif (HSHARIF@UNL.EDU)

- Update: Electronics on Trains Working Group as of 7-9-20:

David Brabb provided the following update on 7-9-20:

We had our call on June 30th. We are buttoning up the latest revision of PRIIA 305 DTL specification to include recommended topologies. That is planned to be completed for limited review this week. Our next call is scheduled for July 21st.

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 July 2020, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on the 22nd.

- Treasurer's update as of 7-22-20:

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As soon as gets an update, Tim will let the FASC members and the Executive Board know.

- Conveying the Message (as of 7-22-20):

One of the NGEC Grant requirements is to develop and keep updated an educational document to provide congress and others (states, Amtrak, industry) with information describing what the NGEC is and what it does, and to highlight its accomplishments.

The FASC oversees this effort with Executive Board approval. In January 2020, the NGEC released its updated background and educational document. To date over 400 hard copies and electronic versions have been distributed. Overall, in the past 15 months we have distributed more than 1300 copies of the most recent versions of the educational document.

It remains available, by request, from Steve Hewitt in both versions hard copy and PDF and is useful in conveying the message – (something that is critical with reauthorization on the table).

With Reauthorization beginning to take shape – at least in the House - it should be noted that, it does not appear to be in the House version of the bill. The NGEC cannot lobby or advocate, which does make it difficult, but other organizations including AASHTO, SPRC, CSG-ERC do have the NGEC reauthorization in their principles.

Steve Hewitt recommended that states check with their government affairs offices individually so that this issue can be worked through the appropriate channels. Tim Ziethen will check with Amtrak government affairs to be sure they have this on their radar as well.

Steve asked Shayne Gill, AASHTO, if his assessment was correct. Shayne acknowledged it is not in the House bill and agreed that Senate Commerce has not yet introduced its DRAFT bill.

Tim Ziethen asked all FASC members to check in with their appropriate channels to make sure this item is on their radar.

- Status Update as of 7-31-20- NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

The group last met on 6-25-20 to go over comments received on the most recent draft. It was a productive session with all comments addressed in one way or another. The title of the document was agreed on by the working group members. Unless the Executive Board has a different name for it, the document will be titled "Recommended Practices".

Some edits suggested on the 6-25-20 call required additional rewriting to address comments made and will be incorporated into an updated DRAFT and there will be another round of working group review.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 7-30-20, but, as of today, because we have not received the updated DRAFT, Chairman Hessinger asked Steve Hewitt to cancel the call. It will be rescheduled once the updated version has been received and circulated. The intent is to give working group members at least two weeks for review. It is hoped that this will be the last round of reviews by the working group before advancing the DRAFT to the Executive Board for its review and comment.

Once the working group has approved the DRAFT document, the Executive Board will be provided at least two weeks of review prior to discussion on a subsequent Board call.

- **Quarterly Grant Progress Report – due to FRA 7-31-20:**

The progress report was completed and submitted by the deadline (7-31-20).

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 17th 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 July 2020, the Review Panels did not meet.