



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: October 30, 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, 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 October 2020, the Executive Board met twice, via web conference, on the 6th and the 20th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of August 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.

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 NGECE 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.

- Executive Board review of NGECE documents to ensure there are no holes in the NGECE 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 NGECE 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.

- Treasurer's Report:

- Balance/Spend Rate:

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

Amount Spent: \$645,579.00.

Balance remaining: \$ 604,421.00.

Projected spending through the remainder of the grant period through 9-30-20: approximately \$28,068.65.

Estimated balance remaining at the end of FFY 2020 (9-30-20: \$576,352.00).

Approximate current spend rate: \$14,034.33.

Estimated spend at current rate for the next 36 months (through 9-30-23 - \$505,235.74

Estimated balance at the end of the Extension Period – 9-30-23 – (Contingency) - \$71,116.61.

- 36 month – No-cost Grant Agreement Extension Executed - Tim Ziethen:

Status: Contract extensions Amtrak/AASHTO, and AASHTO/Sub-contractors (Hewitt, Krause, Casamar, Salci):

As of 10-30-20, the Amtrak/AASHTO 36-month contract extension had been fully executed and the AASHTO/Hewitt 36-month contract extension had also been fully executed. Casamar and Krause contract extensions were in process and the Salci contract for the upcoming DMU Review Panel work is also in process.

- Updating NGECE two-page handout/backgrounder - Tim Ziethen/Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt has begun a review of the two-pager and has some suggestions for updates. The FASC has established a small subgroup to work on this effort. The group is meeting today – following the Board call. The intent is to have the document updated and ready for distribution by January 2-21. MODOT graphics arts has agreed to, once again, format the changes and produce the two-pager and print copies as well.

- Status and next steps: Annual By-Laws Review - Steve Hewitt

Steve Hewitt reported that the FASC approved By-Law changes as proposed by John Oimoen and Steve Hewitt. They are minimal changes, but ones that better reflect the work that is being done by the NGECE at

this point and going forward. In accordance with the By-Laws, the Executive Board must have the proposed changes in writing 30 days prior to taking a vote on them. All Board members were provided with the DASC recommendations on 10-14-20. This would mean the By-Law changes can be discussed and considered by the Board during the 11-17-20 meeting.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 10-29-20:

Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Car structure FDR is complete and the structural test plans have been reviewed and are in revision. Reviews for Vending Cars, Cab Car Interiors, and Diagnostic Systems occurred the week of September 28. IDOT Café Car releases are ongoing. FDR Communications, Diagnostics and Interiors took place in early October. The Café Car IDR has been approved. The new emergency egress window was successfully demonstrated to FRA on September 29.

Workstation table testing is ongoing in Spain and though some parameters have not passed, overall results are positive. Minor modifications and preparation for repeat testing are in work. NEC testing for standard coach is complete and report reviews are ongoing with FRA. Caltrans 238.111 testing is complete, and the final report is in work. The IDOT 238.111 test runs on the IDOT corridors is pending results of the 213 report discussions. Cab Car Compression Test Preparation is ongoing, and test setup is tentative for mid-November.

60 cars total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. System-level FAIs and the Complete Coach FAI are now approved for the standard coach. There are nine cars delivered to the Stockton facility. Four more CALTRANS cars are scheduled to ship on December 2nd. The third IDOT shipment occurred on September 30th and additional cars are tentatively scheduled to ship Mid-November.

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 10-29-20:

On 10-20-20, Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, reported that the procurement effort remains under the “cone of silence”.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 10-29-20:

There was no new activity reported that would change this update

On the Acela on 9-8-20:

The first two “prototypes” continue in different phases of testing.

There may be some delays, but the opportunity to make up some time is there.

On the Locomotives (ACL 42):

Great progress has been made – they are actually beginning to look like locomotives.

The 11th unit is being assembled with the fuel tank as the first item. This is the 11th of a total of 75 units to be built.

On the Intercity Passenger Car procurement – reported on 10-29-20:

This procurement remains in the “cone of silence”.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car RFP as of 10-20-20:

On 10-29-20, Marci Petterson reported to the Technical subcommittee that proposals are due by 11-2-20.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements – as of 10-20-20

On 10-20-20, Ron Bartels, VIA Rail, provided the NGEC 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.

VIA Rail will provide an update to the NGEC Board in 6 months or, potentially during the NGEC Annual Meeting to be held virtually in February 2021.

- Document Control Update - as of 10-29-20:
- Approval of the summary of changes to the NGEC DMU Specification Revision B:

On 10-15-20, the NGEC Technical subcommittee approved the summary of changes presented by Document Control Manager, Tammy Krause as submitted by the Technical working groups. The NGEC Chairman, on 10-20 re-covered the DMU review Panel and tasked it with beginning the review process.

On 10-29-20 Tammy Krause provided the following update to the Technical subcommittee:

Additional information on the DMU DCRs, was submitted by the Mechanical Working Group which made several proposed changes and the Interiors Group also added two new DCRs. These were sent out prior to the 10-29-20 Technical subcommittee meeting.

Steve Hewitt expanded on the issue raising the fact that the additional changes to the DMU specification, sent out today from Tammy Krause, need to be discussed and, if agreed upon, the Technical subcommittee could vote on them. If approved they would be passed on to Larry Salci for inclusion in his review of the summary of changes.

Steve also reported that an email from industry member Rich Bowie asked for consideration of another change:

First row regarding calipers: our WZKT's maintain 1.5+/-0.5mm between pad and disc. These are successfully deployed in significantly large quantities.

Can this be reconsidered?

Jeff Gordon will take this request back to the Mechanical working group. He anticipates this will be no problem and will be approved.

Jeff Gordon also raised the issue that there are two sets of numbers that need to be reconciled. The replacement language in 40 and 41 are not the same. Weight needs to be representative of what the industry thinks it should be and, once resolved, it should be the same in both places in the specification.

Jeff agreed to contact Tammy Krause to discuss this and remedy the issue. Larry Salci also stated he would give Tammy a call as he was involved initially with the DMU and the discussion of weight.

Steve Hewitt recommended, and Chairman Hull agreed, that the vote on the items distributed today should be tabled until the issue is resolved.

It is anticipated that the issue can be resolved over the next two weeks and can be considered on the next Technical subcommittee call on 11-12-20. Larry Salci, Review Panel consultant for the NGEC, will conduct his review of the summary of changes approved previously by the Technical subcommittee while awaiting resolution of the issues raised today (10-29-20).

Tammy also reported on the status of the Ownership best practices document (Recommended Practices) stating that it is still with the Technical Writer. A discussion was to take place later that day between the Technical Writer and Tammy (10-29-20).

- 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 NGEC two-pager – educational document as of 10-30-20:

The updated NGEC two-pager remains available in hard copy and PDF. To date about 410 copies have been distributed.

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

As noted above, the Finance and Administrative subcommittee has begun a review and update of the NGEC two-pager which will be completed and available for distribution by January 2021.

- Industry member's concerns- Email addresses posted on the NGEC website and being used for solicitations:

On 10-20-20, Steve Hewitt reported that an NGEC industry member had approached him with concerns over the listing of industry members email addresses on the NGEC website. A company that has no association with the NGEC utilized the public website to obtain the industry email list and sent out a solicitation.

It was decided that this will be an agenda item for discussion on the next (10-29-20) NGEC Technical subcommittee call where 20-30 industry members usually are in attendance. If the general sense is that they would prefer to be given a choice to opt out of having their email addresses listed on the NGEC website. If opting out is the choice, Steve Hewitt will send an email to that effect out to all NGEC industry participants.

On the Technical subcommittee meeting on 10-29-20, it was decided that the industry members email addresses will remain posted on the NGEC website unless otherwise requested by a particular member. Any member contacting Steve Hewitt to request removal of their email address will be accommodated – otherwise the addresses remain. To date, only the one email address will be removed.

- NGEC Annual Meeting – 2021:

It has been determined that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the NGEC Annual Meeting for 2021 will be held virtually rather than in person at a date to be determined - likely during the month of February 2021.

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 October 2020, the Technical subcommittee met three times, via conference call, on the 1st, the 15th and the 29th.

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

- Backgrounder educational document:

The current NGEN 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 Finance and Administrative subcommittee has begun the process of updating the document with the intent being to have it ready for distribution in January 2021.

- AWG/RVACC:

Technical subcommittee review of Access Board advance NPRM Accessibility Guidelines and compare with current NGEN 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 NGEN 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 10-1-20 – the Access Board appears 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 NGEN 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 as of 6-25-20:

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.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 10-29-20:

Hamid Shari-Kashani reported that they are continuing to progress the current phase in which they are studying frequency performance issues for the different band widths. They are looking to find a way to resolve saturation. Their focus is on 160 Mega Hertz. They are looking at their previous modeling to see if they can adapt it for 160 Mega Hertz.

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

- Update: Electronics on Trains Working Group as of 10-29-20:

The NGEC Electronics subcommittee had a web conference on Tuesday, September 8th. We have received the final comments/edits to the latest PRIIA 305 DTL Hardware specification. After implementing the comments/edits, we plan to issue revision 2020B before our next scheduled web conference on September 29th. In that meeting we plan to discuss the next step in the specification development process which likely will be the addition of firmware specs/info to the DTL doc.

Steve Hewitt pointed out to David Brabb, when he submitted his report, that he would ask Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager to reach out to David to make sure that the NGEC procedures are being followed in revising/updating the specification. Steve has sent a message to Tammy and asked that she reach out to David.

As of 9-30-20, Tammy Krause reached out to David Brabb and described the process to be followed to officially revise the specification.

On 10-29-20, David Brabb reported that the October meeting (10-27-20) had been postponed, but work continued on updating the PRIIA Reference specification DTL 305-919 (hardware) and that they will next begin development of the software specification DTL 305-920.

- Industry Email Addresses posted on the NGEC website being used for solicitations:

Steve Hewitt reported that a concern was raised by an NGEC industry participant regarding the posting of the email addresses of industry members on the NGEC website. Steve Hewitt noted that the NGEC is required to keep open records and has always posted contact information for all registered members of the industry as well as the states, Amtrak, FRA etc. The individual raised the issue because he received a solicitation (as did many, or “all” of the industry participants) from an entity that is not associated with the NGEC in any way. This entity must have gotten the email list from the public (open record) NGEC website.

The individual raising the concern, favored having all industry email addresses removed from the contact list on the website.

After much discussion, the resolution of this issue is that Steve Hewitt will remove the email address of the member that raised the concern and will that of any member who requests it going forward. Otherwise the list will remain as is.

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 October 2020, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on the 14th.

- Treasurer's update as of 10-20-20:

See the Executive Board section of this report..

- Conveying the Message (as of 10-14-20):

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

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), which has already informed House and Senate members of its' support for reauthorizing the NGEN by including it in its authorizing principles, is now in the process of finalizing a package to send to Senate Commerce with a copies to the House side.

Steve Hewitt, again, recommended that states check with their government affairs offices individually so that this issue can be worked through their channels and that AASHTO and Amtrak also re-enforce the request.

While it is quite unlikely that Congress will enact the FAST Act successor in this Congress, and that would mean it would need to be brought back up in the next Congress, it is still good to get on the record – again – and to be prepared to do further outreach on both the Senate and House side as the new Congress convenes.

Arun Rao, Chairman of SPRC and a member of the NGEN executive Board and FASC confirmed Steve's report that SPRC's package is under final review and will be going out soon.

Tim Ziethen confirmed that he has contacted Ken Altman to ensure that this continues to be a part of Amtrak's reauthorization requests. Ken confirmed that they did include it and would continue to do so. He asked Tim for some additional information which Tim has drafted and will provide to Steve Hewitt for his review and comment.

Shayne Gill confirmed that AASHTO did include the NGEN reauthorization 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.

Shayne also noted that there has been discussion on the Hill of passing a one-year clean extension of the FAST Act rather than let it expire on 9-30-20.

Steve Hewitt added that, because the NGEN was reauthorized in the FAST Act – a clean extension would mean it would also be included in a clean extension.

There was no funding included in the FAST Act reauthorization of the NGEN, but the 36 month no-cost grant agreement extension will enable the NGEN to continue its work for the life of the agreement.

The SPRC request will include an authorization for \$2.5 million over the life of the bill.

This effort has been completed for the 2020 Congressional session:

SPRC submitted a package to the committees of jurisdiction utilizing information provided by the NGEN. AASHTO and Amtrak have also expressed support for reauthorizing the NGEN in the successor to the FAST Act.

Congress has 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.

- Status Update as of 10-29-20- NGEN Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

As of 10-29-20, The 4th DRAFT revision remains with the Technical writer. Document Control Manager, Tammy Krause had scheduled a call with her on 10-29-20 to get a status update.

The intent continues to be 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:**

The next quarterly report for the period from 10-1-20 through 12-31-20 will be due to FRA by January 31, 2021.

The quarterly report for the period from July 1, 2020 through 9-30-2020 was submitted by Amtrak to FRA on October 30, 2020.

Information on activities to be reported in the Quarterly report were included in the last monthly Activities Update Report (9-30-20).

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 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 noted in the Executive Board section of this report, several additional changes to the DMU specification have been proposed since the approval of the summary of changes by the Technical subcommittee on 10-15-20. Those changes will be considered on the 11-12-20 Technical subcommittee call and will be sent directly to Mr. Salci for inclusion in his review.