



*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: February 28, 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 February 2021, the Executive Board met twice, (including the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting) via web conference, on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of February 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 NGE 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 2-28-21 – this item remains in a holding pattern.

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

On 2-23-21, during the Annual Meeting – it was reported that a DRAFT 6 pager primer has been developed and is in review within Amtrak Mechanical. It is expected to be circulated through the Technical subcommittee for review in the near future and ultimately to the Executive Board. This is an item, once approved, which may be added to the PRIIA 305-220 Recommended Practices document.

- Treasurer's Report – 2-23-21 Annual Meeting Report:

<b><i>NGEC 305 Grant Reporting</i></b>		
<i>Current Grant - Period of Performance through 9/30/2023</i>		
WBS C.CF.100674.0001	Technical Subcommittee	\$ -
WBS C.CF.100674.0002/B.ME.100032.0001	AASHTO/Services	\$ 701,847.62
WBS C.CF.100674.0003	Administrative Task Force	\$ 4,478.84
WBS C.CF.100674.0004	Executive Board	\$ 793.29
<b>Total Grant Spending (Invoiced through Dec 2020)</b>		<b>\$ 707,119.75</b>
	Total Invoiced/Incurred	\$ 701,847.62
	Total Incurred for AASHTO/Services	\$ 701,847.62
	All Other Admin Expenses	\$ 5,272.13
<b>Total Incurred for all WBS Line Items</b>		<b>\$ 707,119.75</b>
<b>Grant Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,250,000.00</b>
<b>Remaining Funds included accrued expenses - Balance</b>		<b>\$ 542,880.25</b>
<b>Estimated spend at current rate for the next 33 months</b>		<b>\$ 457,548.07</b>
<b>Current Spend Rate (as info and used in calculations)</b>		<b>\$ 13,865.09</b>
<b>Estimated Balance at End of Extension Period (Contingency)</b>		<b>\$ 85,332.18</b>

The full Report was formally accepted by the NGEC Executive Board at the Annual Meeting as presented and is available on the NGEC website.

- 2021 NGEC two-pager:

The two-page NGEC 2021 educational document was distributed electronically to all NGEC members – including over 200 members of the industry. By the end of 2021 – an update will be made to it for 2022.

- 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 2-9-21:

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 with compression testing planned for March or April. IDOT Café Car releases are ongoing and open items are being addressed. The new emergency egress windows are being installed on cars in California and Illinois. Cab Car Clearance, Lighting and Electrical FDR meetings occurred in January with additional reviews tentative for March.

The Maintainability Demonstration was performed on January 22<sup>nd</sup> in Stockton and open items are in work. 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 and FRA. The IDOT 238.111 test runs were completed in January and the report is in work.

70 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. Four Caltrans cars are scheduled to ship in late February.

On 2-23-21, Caltrans provided a comprehensive presentation on this procurement at the Annual Meeting. The presentation is available on the NGEC website.

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Update as of 2-23-20:

MTA approved the award of the Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive contract to Siemens. Metro-North is in the process of finalizing the contract documents to formalize the agreement.

Dwight Sowden, Metro-North provided a comprehensive presentation on this procurement at the Annual Meeting. The presentation is available on the NGEC website.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 2-9-21:

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.

Amtrak, (George Hull) provided a comprehensive presentation on this procurement at the Annual Meeting. The presentation is available on the NGEC website.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car RFP as of 2-4-21:

As of 2-4-21, Marci Petterson reported to the Technical subcommittee that CtDOT has completed reviewing and rating the proposals received and will begin negotiations with the highest proposer next week.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

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.

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.

On 2-23-21 at the Annual Meeting a comprehensive overview/update of the VIA Rail procurement was presented by Mario Bergeron, Bruce Cacciola, Ron Bartels, and Joe DiLiello. This full presentation was distributed to NGEC members and is posted on the NGEC website.

- Document Control Update - as of 2-23-21:

Tammy Krause, the NGEC Document Control Manager, provided a progress report during the Annual Meeting on 2-23-21 noting 2020 accomplishments as well as a look ahead:

**2020 Accomplishments:**

- The DMU Specification was updated to Rev A with 81 changes that were approved by the Working Groups. These changes were approved by the Technical Subcommittee. After this approval Stadler US, a DMU manufacturer, requested additional time to review the specification. I have now received approximately 120 additional proposed changes. These will be made into DCRs and sent to the appropriate working groups for review.
- Document, #305-200, Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices was developed by the Best Practices Working Group. This document should be approved today by the EB.
- The Trainset Specification Rev B has been approved but is not compiled. While making the approved changes, it was determined that the specification did not follow the PRIIA goal of using the same chapter layout and same basic chapters. The specification is currently being reorganized.

**2021 Plans:**

- Complete the DMU Specification.
- Complete the reorganization of the Trainset Specification Rev B.
- Review the APTA PRESS Standards and Recommended Practices for updates required for our specifications.

**2021 Specification Updates:**

- The Bi-Level Specification will be the next specification to be updated. The current revision is revision C.4 from 2016.
- Several of the PRIIA specifications have been used for upcoming and current procurements. (Amtrak, CtDOT, NCDOT, All Aboard Florida, Metro-North, VIA Rail).
- These specifications need to be reviewed for updates to the PRIIA specifications.

- 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.

As of 2-28-21 – nothing new has been reported.

- Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Rail Car Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the 2021 Annual Meeting and were distributed to NGEC members and can be found on the NGEC website.

- NGEC Annual Meeting – 2021:

On 2-23-21, the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting took place virtually with 104 attendees. This is the second highest number to participate since the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting which took place at FRA in Washington, DC in 2011.

The following Actions and Decisions were taken during the Annual meeting on 2-23-21:

Approval of the Minutes from the 2-9-21 Executive Board Meeting
The NGEC Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented.
The NGEC Executive Board adopted PRIIA 305-200 Recommended Practices document – Steve Hewitt will add it to the NGEC inventory of reference documents.
Along with the NGEC Chairman's Report there were also updates provided from Amtrak Government Affairs, FRA, The FASC and Treasurer's Report, the Technical subcommittee, the Technical working group on vehicle weights, Document Control, and on the five ongoing procurements and deployments.  All PowerPoint Presentations that were provided on these reports will be posted to the NGEC website <a href="http://www.305NGEC.org">www.305NGEC.org</a> and will also be distributed along with these minutes to NGEC members.
Filling Vacancies:  Chairman Hessinger appointed Ed Engle, Iowa DOT, to fill vacancies that occurred due to the retirement of Phil Meraz from Iowa DOT. Ed is hereby appointed to serve on the Technical subcommittee and on the Trainset and Single Level Rail Car Specification Review Panels.  The Chair also noted that Brent Thompson, WSDOT, was retiring from state service and had resigned as first Vice Chair of the NGEC FASC. It will be up to FASC Chair Tim Ziethen to appoint a first Vice Chair.  WSDOT has expressed its intention to remain on the subcommittee and at present Jason Biggs will serve as its voting member.  Ray also reported that Michael Lestingi, FRA has been moved to the front office to serve as Acting Executive Director of the FRA, and in that capacity will not serve on the NGEC. FRA has appointed Jeff Gordon to serve as its voting member of the Executive Board and Jeff will also retain his current positions within the NGEC.

**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 February 2021, the Technical subcommittee met once, via conference call, on the 4<sup>th</sup> and participated at the 11<sup>th</sup> NGEAC Annual Meeting held virtually on 2-23-21.

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

- Backgrounder educational document:

The Executive Board has approved the 2021 NGEAC educational document. It has been distributed electronically to all NGEAC members and is available in hard copy and/or in a PDF by sending a request to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com)

- AWG/RVACC:

Technical subcommittee review of Access Board advance NPRM Accessibility Guidelines and compare with current NGEAC 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 NGEAC 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 2-28-21 – 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 NGEAC 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 February 2021.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 2-4-21:

Hamid Sharif-Kashani provided a brief update on the status of the current phase of the University of Nebraska/FRA High-Speed Wireless Study. The current focus is on computer modeling and performance measures for rail application. They are focusing this effort on 160 Mega Hertz – they will build a model for that frequency and look later at other frequency bands.

For more information, please contact Hamid Sharif ([hamidsharif@uni.edu](mailto:hamidsharif@uni.edu))

Next Update: 3-18- 21

- Update: Electronics on Trains Working Group as of 1-26-21:

The following update was provided by David Brabb on 1-26-21:

*On 1-26-21, we had a call with a fairly good-sized group today (for us) at 3pm eastern. We are looking at finishing up the first revision to 305-919 hardware spec., by moving appropriate firmware info to that spec from 305-920. We will reach out to you when we are ready to follow the appropriate procedure for issuing a revision.*

*We do have a couple of new team members that are eager to share lessons learned and what/how they are doing with some of their designs/ builds. The two new gentlemen are Kevin Sudano (Transit Consultant) and Fabio Cussigh of VDS Rail in Italy. Ken Martin (Sharma) and I plan to meet with them in a separate call, in early February 2021 to gather whatever information that they want to share. Of course, all information gathered will be shared/vetted with our group.*

*Our next NGENC Electronics call is scheduled for March 2nd at 3pm eastern.*

Next Update 3-18-21

- Update: The Passenger ECP Brakes and APTA Press Standards:

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.

- Working Group on Specification Wright Issues as of 2-4-21:

Jeff Gordon, FRA, reported that the working group – established in December 2020 has met twice and now has a membership of 20 volunteers. The members include representatives from Amtrak, FRA, car builders, consultants – “the whole gamut”.

The first meeting was organizational in nature determining what to do and how to go forward. A review of the weight requirements in each specification are being reviewed with specific car builders volunteering to review them.

On the last call – Alstom gave a great presentation and made several suggestions on what could have or would work for the Bi-Level specification. Other presentations on other specs will be forthcoming. The

intent is to develop some kind of sub-specification that will address weight issues as they pertain to the various vehicle types. It is a more comprehensive approach rather than using a one-size fits all approach for all of the vehicle specs.

The next meeting of the working group will take place on 2-24-21 at 3:00pm Eastern.

Additional volunteers are welcome – contact Jeff Gordon – [Jeffrey.gordon@dot.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.gordon@dot.gov) or Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com) if you wish to join the effort.

On 2-23-21, Jeff Gordon provided a more detailed presentation to the Annual meeting attendees and that presentation is posted on the NGENC website.

### **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 February 2021, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee did not meet due to schedule conflicts. However, the work of the subcommittee continued with preparation for the Annual Meeting and completion of the Annual Treasurer's Report to the Executive Board being priorities:

- Treasurer's Report as of 2-23-21:

Please see the Executive Board section of this report for the most recent Treasurer's Finance Update.

- Conveying the Message (2-23-21):

Congress extended the FAST Act for one year and that extension includes the NGENC. 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 NGENC 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 NGENC by including it in its authorizing principles, submitted a letter further expressing its support for reauthorizing the NGENC 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 NGENC 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.

This remains a priority and will be a focus for 2021.

- Updating the NGENC two-pager for 2021:

The 2021 two-page educational document has been published and distributed to all NGEC members. It is available, by request, through Steve Hewitt. Later this year, the FASC will conduct a review and update of the document for 2022.

- Status Update as of 2-28-21-21 - NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

The initial work of this group is complete. PRIIA 305-200 Recommended Practices was adopted by the NGEC Executive Board on 2-23-21 during the Annual Meeting. It will be added to the NGEC documents inventory and will remain a living document to be updated as more procurements take place and changes are recommended. As an example, the TSSSA primer being developed by the Technical subcommittee may be added to the document as an addendum.

- 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 NGEC 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.

As of 2-28-21, changes recommended by Stadler Rail have been submitted to the Document Control Manager and distributed for review by the Technical working groups.