



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, 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 July 2021, the Executive Board met once via web conference, on the 13th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of July 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 of 7-31-21 – this item remains in a holding pattern.

- 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 July 2021, the NGEC the Executive Board approved the TSSSA document as submitted by the Technical subcommittee with some minor edits/corrections. The document is now being finalized with the approved changes and will become a part of the NGEC inventory of documents. It will be distributed to all NGEC members once finalized and will be posted on the NGEC website.

- Treasurer's Report – 7-31-21:

Balance and Spend Rate

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

Amount Spent through April 2021: \$766,612.50

Balance remaining: \$ 483,387.50.

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$404,213.86.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$13,938.41

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$79,173.64

- 2021 NGEC two-pager:

The 2021 version of the NGEC two-page backgrounder/educational document remains available electronically or in hard copy by request - contact Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

To date approximately 555 electronic versions have been distributed.

In July, the Finance and Administrative subcommittee developed a timeline and process to develop an updated two-pager for 2022. The goal is to publish/distribute hard copies of the 2022 version during the in-person NGEC Annual Meeting to be held in Washington, DC on 2-25-22.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 7-31-21:

Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Car structure FDR has been approved. The Cab Car Diagnostics and Display FDR occurred July 21. The Vending Car Interiors FDR will take place August 3rd. IDOT Café Car FDR is the completion stage and the Galley FAI occurred June 23rd in Texas. Several Cab Car FAIs are tentative for August and September. A wheelchair lift demonstration is being planned for mid-August using an IDOT business class car.

The Cab Car Compression Test began July 13 and is ongoing with regular updates being provided. Cab Car Collision and Corner Post testing has been reserved for August in Germany with remote and possible in-person participation being considered. NEC testing for standard coach is complete and the report is accepted by FRA. Caltrans and IDOT 238.111 testing is complete and both reports have been submitted to Amtrak and FRA.

93 cars total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. Car deliveries are ongoing to Chicago and Beech Grove for IDOT, and Stockton for Caltrans. IDOT has conditionally accepted 8 coach cars and is preparing for revenue service. The Caltrans cars are being prepared for Conditional Acceptance and revenue service while open items are addressed.

Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 7-31-21:

- Metro-North and Siemens continue working through the initial design review process going item by item.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 7-31-21:

On the CAF cars: The last two cars are being completed.

On the Acela 21: Testing continues – they are looking to get the first trainset “factoried” in August 2021. They are currently going through testing with FRA.

On the Charger Locomotives: the first two are currently in Wilmington for testing.

On the Intercity Passenger Rail trainsets: This week they kicked off the design review process with Siemens.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car RFP as of 7-31-21:

This procurement remains in the “cone of silence” period.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

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.

The next update is anticipated to take place around September 2021.

- Document Control Update - as of 7-31-21:

The focus is on compiling the summary of changes for the DMU Specification Revision.

On 7-27-21, the summary of changes were distributed to the full Technical subcommittee for review and comments. On 8-5-21, the Technical subcommittee will spend time discussion the changes and any comments received and may consider approval if it appears that there is consensus.

If approved at the subcommittee level, the summary of changes will be submitted to the NGEC Executive Board chair who will reconvene the DMU specification Review Panel and direct panel consultant Larry Salci to include these items in his current review and recommendation of the DMU proposed revisions against the NGEC DMU Requirements document for compliance.

- 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.

- Reauthorizing the NGEC as of 7-31-21:

The Senate Committee released their version of Federal Surface Transportation Authorization legislation several weeks ago and it also does not include the NGEC.

Following the last NGEC Executive Board call (7-13-21), John Oimoen, IDOT, informed his Government Affairs office of the issue about the NGEC not yet being in either authorization bill or concerns over future funding. He emphasized the importance of the NGEC and how IDOT and the Mid-West states and others have benefited from the NGEC throughout the procurement process and cited the resulting production and placement into service of the new locomotives and now passenger rail cars.

Steve Hewitt provided him with background information and proposed legislative language (scope and funding), which he gave to his Deputy Secretary, Doug House. Initial conversations with Senator Durbin’s staff were positive, and they were receptive.

This week (7-22-21) IDOT’s Secretary and Deputy Secretary are in DC this week. They are working the Hill and John provided the following email he received from Deputy Secretary Doug House on the issue of the NGEC:

John, Yes, the Secretary and I have followed up with the delegation and personally placed it in the hands of Secretary Buttigieg's staff Charles Small Government Liaison, Maurice Henderson Senior Advisor. All that can be done is being done! Cross your fingers!

Amtrak Government Relations has also been reached out to from the industry, members of the NGEC and from SPRC. The reaction has been that Amtrak is supportive and believes that there are several ways to go – Reauthorization with funding is the cleaner way, but, if it does not happen, the NGEC is still funded through 9-30-2023, and since there is no sunset in the PRIIA or Fast Act legislation, the NGEC will continue to move forward with its work. The NGEC funding can come from a variety of places: FRA, Amtrak and/or reauthorization of funding followed by an appropriation from Congress.

Several members of the industry continue to make clear their support for the NGEC and for its reauthorization with funding.

NGEC Annual Meeting 2022:

As announced previously, the NGEC will hold its 2022 Annual Meeting in-person at the Hyatt Regency, Capitol Hill on February 25, 2022. The meeting will begin at 8:30am and conclude around Noon (Eastern). More details will follow as an agenda is developed and the time for the meeting draws nearer. All NGEC members have been informed of the date and location of the meeting

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 Julye 2021, the technical subcommittee met once, via web conference call, on the 22nd.

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

- Backgrounder educational document:

The 2021 NGEC educational document. remains available in hard copy and/or in a PDF by sending a request to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

Total distribution is approximately 555 as of 7-31-21. All distributions have been electronic to date.

- 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.

As of 7-31-21 – the Access Board continues 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 NGEC 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.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 7-22-21:

On 7-22-21, Hamid Sharif-Kashani provided a general update on the activities of the current study phase being performed by the University of Nebraska and the FRA:

They are looking at modeling and performance evaluation of 160Mega Hertz and 450 Mega Hertz as potential options as other frequencies are becoming close to saturation.

They are doing modeling and simulation looking at things like antennas, velocity, train area, etc. and performance evaluation in terms of signal strength.

They are also looking at different ways for propagating a model for channels.

Hamid stated that they are going to continue modeling with the intent of sharing some of the key elements in August. At that time, Hamid would provide Steve Hewitt with that information to share with the Technical subcommittee members.

In the meantime, Hamid encourages members who have interest in specific applications they would like to have run in frequency bands to let Hamid know and they would be happy to run them in their model for evaluation.

For any questions, please contact Hamid Sharif at hamidSharif@UNL.edu.

- Working Group on Specification Wright Issues as provided by Jeff Gordon, FRA on 7-22-21:

The NGEC Vehicle Weight Working Group has its 7th meeting on July 12. There were 15 members in attendance.

The group has agreed on a definition for the baseline production weight for different types of equipment and allowable serial production vehicle weight deviations (including requirements for vehicle scales).

We discussed lateral imbalance and some ideas for how this parameter can be defined in a common way for all specifications.

We also discussed end-to-end imbalance requirements and how these should be defined. The group had much discussion about whether there was really a need for this requirement as it is not a safety issue. The group believes this is more a maintenance concern and we may incorporate proposed specification language addressing this.

Carbuilder members volunteered to review the various specification weights and propose revisions (if any) at the next meeting.

P2 limits for coaches will also be discussed during our next meeting which will be on August 9, 2021, at 1pm Eastern.

Reauthorizing the NGEC:

See Executive Board section of this report for an update on activities related to this topic.

The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee

Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine 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 2021, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on 7-21-21:

- Treasurer's Report as of 7-21-21:

Balance and Spend Rate

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

Amount Spent through April 2021: \$766,612.50

Balance remaining: \$ 483,387.50.

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$404,213.86.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$13,938.41

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$79,173.64

- Conveying the message (Federal Surface Transportation Authorization) as of 7-22-21:

2021 NGEC two-page handout

Over 555 of these documents have been distributed electronically. Feedback continues to be positive.

- Setting Timelines for Annual By-Laws Review and Two-Pager Update:

On 7-21-21, Steve Hewitt suggested that, in September, FASC Secretary, John Oimoen and Steve Hewitt begin the annual review of the NGEC By-Laws and make any suggestions they may have to the FASC by the end of October. If the FASC agrees, the By-Laws as revised (or not) will be sent to the Executive Board where they will be required to have them for 30 days before considering any changes that may be suggested. This will enable the Board to vote for consideration of approval by December 2021 and fulfill the annual review requirement.

John Oimoen, agreed to participate in the review, and Tim Ziethen approved the timeline as suggested.

The two-pager, Steve Hewitt suggested, should be reviewed, again by the FASC and recommended updates should be provided to the Executive Board for consideration.

This document should have updates as spec revisions will have taken place, more vehicles will have been put in service and an even better story can be told. The goal will be to have a DRAFT update approved by the Executive Board by January 2022 to allow for time to be finalized electronically and in hard copy for distribution at the NGEC Annual meeting on 2-25-22.

Steve asked Troy Hughes, MODOT, if the MODOT graphics art office would be willing to, once again, make the updates and print the hard copies.

Troy Hughes agreed to have MODOT, once again, produce the document with whatever changes are requested and provide it electronically and print hard copies as needed.

Reauthorization of the NGEC

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

- Quarterly Grant Progress Report:

The quarterly report for the period ending 6-30-21 was submitted by the deadline of 7-31-21.

Next Report will be on the period ending 9-30-21 and will be due to FRA on 10-31-21.

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.

As of 7-31-21 – there were no changes in the activities of the Review Panels, however, the Technical subcommittee will be discussing and possibly considering approval of the DMU summary of changes as adjudicated within the technical working groups. If approved out of the Technical subcommittee, the Executive Board chair will direct them to the DMU Specification Review Panel per NGEC procedures.