



NEC Future Program – DC, MD, DE, PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA

Environmental Impact Statement

NEC FUTURE is a comprehensive planning effort to define, evaluate, and prioritize future investments in the Northeast Corridor (NEC) from Washington, D.C., to Boston. The NEC is the rail transportation spine of the Northeast and a key component of the region's transportation system. The NEC supports the operation of eight Regional rail authorities and Amtrak—the Intercity rail service provider—as well as four freight railroads.

The Federal Railroad Administration launched NEC FUTURE in 2012 to evaluate improvements to address passenger rail transportation needs within the multi-state Study Area. NEC FUTURE results in a framework for future investment in the NEC through 2040 and beyond. The FRA prepared a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 EIS). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was a cooperating agency in the NEPA process.

FRA released the Tier 1 Draft EIS in November 2015, for a public comment period that ended in mid-February 2016. Using comments and information received from the public and stakeholders during the comment process, along with consideration of the findings of the Tier 1 Draft EIS analysis as well as DOT and FRA policy, the FRA developed a Preferred Alternative that outlines a vision and investment program to guide future passenger rail investment on the NEC.

The FRA presented the Preferred Alternative along with an analysis of its impacts and benefits, in the Tier 1 Final EIS, released in December 2016. The Tier 1 Final EIS also included responses to comments received on the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

After holding a waiting period after the release of the Tier 1 Final EIS, during which FRA invited the public to review and provide feedback on the Preferred Alternative and the contents of the Tier 1 Final EIS, FRA released a Record of Decision in July 2017. The Record of Decision (ROD) presents the Selected Alternative, which will guide future investments on the NEC and reflects feedback from many stakeholders, agencies, organizations, and individuals. The FRA selected a corridor-wide vision for the NEC that encompasses improvements to grow the role of rail within the transportation system of the Northeast region. To achieve this vision, the Selected Alternative includes the following four components:

- **Improve Rail Service:** Corridor-wide service and performance objectives for frequency, travel time, design speed, and passenger convenience.
- **Modernize NEC Infrastructure:** Corridor-wide repair, replacement, and rehabilitation of the existing NEC to bring the corridor into a state of good repair and increase reliability.
- **Expand Rail Capacity:** Additional infrastructure between Washington, D.C., and New Haven, CT, and between Providence, RI, and Boston, MA, as needed to achieve the service and performance objectives, including investments that add capacity, increase speeds, and eliminate chokepoints.



- **Study New Haven to Providence Capacity:** Planning study in Connecticut and Rhode Island to identify additional on- and off-corridor infrastructure as needed to achieve the service and performance objectives.

The ROD marks the completion of the Tier 1 environmental review process; however, the ROD does not result in construction, and no agency permits or approvals will be applied for or issued as part of the Tier 1 process. The pace and phasing to advance the Selected Alternative will depend on many factors, including decisions by the railroads and Northeast states, the availability of funding, market conditions, and practical operating constraints. A project-level Tier 2 environmental review would be conducted as part of any project.

The Tier 1 Draft and Final EIS, as well as the Tier 1 Record of Decision, are available at the [project website](#).

More Information

FRA provides full detail along with links to all project documents, including several Alternatives Development Reports, the Tier 1 Draft EIS, the Tier 1 Final EIS, and project newsletters, on the [project website](#).