Regional Rail Planning

MIPRC Annual Meeting
St. Paul, MN

Overview
Planning Context
FRA Rail Planning Framework
What is a Regional Rail Plan?
Example: Southwest Study
FRA-led Regional Rail Plans in the Southeast and Midwest: Next Steps
$10 billion investment | 85% dedicated to 6 key corridors

CORRIDORS: 6,000+ miles constructed or improved
SAFETY: Track & bridge improvements, grade crossings & separations, PTC & signals
STATIONS: 40+ new or upgraded
EQUIPMENT: Appx. 260 passenger cars, 105 locomotives, 3 trainsets
ENGINEERING: 75+ engineering/environmental studies
PLANNING: 30+ State Rail Plans and service development plans

Existing & Potential U.S. Rail Network
FRA Rail Planning Framework

National Rail Planning
Regional Rail Plans
Corridor Plans
Project-level Plans
State Rail Plans

National Rail Planning

National Planning Parameters

“Tier 0” Regional Rail Plans
Tier I Corridors & Terminal Areas
Tier II Projects

Standardized Criteria, Tools, & Guidance

Contents

• Criteria for federal investment
• Models, methodologies, & guidance

NEPA
Guidance for project sponsors

FRA Role
Establish investment policies and develop models/guidance

What does the map look like?
Regional Planning

National Planning Parameters

“Tier 0” Regional Rail Plans

Tier I Corridors & Terminal Areas

Tier II Projects

Contents
- Regional network vision
- Regional service plan
- Institutional/financial plans

NEPA
n/a

FRA Role
- Provide toolkits and best practices
- Facilitate cross-border institutional relationships
- Fund projects consistent with adopted regional plans

What does the map look like?

Corridor Planning (Tier I)

National Planning Parameters

“Tier 0” Regional Rail Plans

Tier I Corridors & Terminal Areas

Tier II Projects

Contents
- Corridor alignments
- Terminal area plans
- Detailed service plans

NEPA
Service-level (Tier I)

FRA Role
- Provide service development planning and NEPA guidance
- Review/approve grant or loan deliverables

What does the map look like?
**Project-level Planning (Tier II)**

- **Contents**
  - Project-level engineering
  - Construction/delivery plans
  - Project management plans

- **NEPA**
  - Project-level (Tier II)

- **FRA Role**
  - Provide project delivery guidance
  - Review/approve grant or loan deliverables

**State Rail Plans Within the FRA Planning Framework**
What is a Regional Rail Plan?

A regional rail plan:

- Is a visioning plan led by the FRA in partnership with regional stakeholders that presents a long-term concept for a high-performance rail network within a megaregion.

- Will help the region and FRA determine the priorities, studies, and investment needs to advance projects within a multi-state network context.

- Illustrates how links with local transit, aviation, highway, and non-motorized modes can create a seamless, integrated transportation system to carry travelers from origin to destination throughout the region.

- Identifies the potential institutional arrangements, financial requirements, phasing, planning and development activities needed to achieve the vision.
Elements of a Regional Rail Plan

- Assess baseline conditions and market opportunities for rail in the region
- Analyze regional transportation goals, studies, and priorities for all modes
- Identify potential corridors and connections for testing with the CONNECT Tool

- Develop a map of the proposed passenger rail network, describing the communities to be served by rail and the corridors between them
- Describe service plan concepts to link markets in the network with characteristics (frequencies, speeds, capacities)
- Describe potential benefits to freight rail
- Describe multi-modal integration opportunities
Elements of a Regional Rail Plan

- Identify a working group to address the institutional, financial, political, and regulatory structures necessary to develop, operate, maintain, and fund the envisioned system
- Deliver a proposal and action plan to set the institutional and governance framework in place

- Create a map and written description of the proposed regional network, including corridor-by-corridor description of service levels and potential stations
- Develop a prioritization plan for developing or upgrading specific segments of the regional network in a logical order
Elements of a Regional Rail Plan

- **Baseline Conditions & Market Assessment**
  - Create a high-level, conceptual capital cost estimate for developing the regional network

- **Generalized Network Vision & Service Plan**
  - Create conceptual operating financial forecasts for the regional network

- **Governance Strategies**
  - Conduct a benefit-cost analysis for the regional network from a network perspective

- **Prioritized Investments & Map**
  - Conduct an assessment of potential funding sources and private sector participation

- **Costs, Benefits & Funding**

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Elements of a Regional Rail Plan

- **Baseline Conditions & Market Assessment**
  - Member states adopt the findings of the Regional Rail Plan and join the regional governance framework

- **Generalized Network Vision & Service Plan**
  - Incorporate relevant studies, corridors, and projects from the Regional Rail Plan into State Rail Plans to ensure eligibility for federal grants under the HSIPR program

- **Governance Strategies**

- **Prioritized Investments & Map**

- **Costs, Benefits & Funding**
Overview

Study Purpose and Objectives:

- Identify network of “candidate corridors” for further evaluation and planning using CONNECT tool.
- Identify institutional challenges and opportunities related to multi-state rail development and delivery.

More than 60 stakeholders from six states met multiple times over seven months.
Planning Context

Land Development Patterns
Demographics
Economic Activity
Existing and Forecast Travel

Network Analysis Approach

Table 1 Operating recovery ratio performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Stand-alone¹</th>
<th>Network²</th>
<th>Multi-state Corridor</th>
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<td>San Francisco–Reno (Regional)</td>
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¹ Operating recovery ratio: $X = <1$; $1 < X < 2$; $X > 2$;
Preliminary Network Vision

Rail Network and Service Concepts


Study Recommendations

Integrate the SW Multi-State Rail Planning Study into existing and ongoing transportation planning efforts

Establish a SW Rail Working Group to initiate implementation of the Study’s governance recommendations

Convene a voluntary CA-AZ-NV Passenger Rail Policy & Planning Group

Form a Blue Ribbon Commission to guide a Phoenix-Southern California Corridor Study
Federal involvement is important
Provide clear definition of study purpose and potential outcomes
Incorporate other modes into process
Initiate development of goals and P&N early in multi-state process
Concentrate stakeholder efforts on in-person workshops
No one-size-fits-all governance approach

FRA-led Regional Rail Planning: Next Steps

• FRA has funding authority provided under the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 113-76) to lead two regional rail plans and has selected the Midwest and Southeast for those efforts
• FRA will procure contractors to assist with the planning efforts and to update/improve the CONNECT Tool
• FRA is meeting with regional partners to identify stakeholders and gain feedback about regional needs
• Please share your input!
Thank you!

Questions?

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