



Southeast Corridor Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2022
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM EST

Roll Call

Julie White, SEC Chair, conducted a roll call at 4:00 PM on January 11, 2022.

Present

Committee			
State	Commission Member / Proxy	Technical Committee Member	Others
DC	<i>Not Present</i>	Jim Benton	
Virginia	Emily Stock	Randy Selleck	
North Carolina	Julie White	Eddie McFalls	Jason Orthner
South Carolina	Brent Rewis	Doug Frate	
Tennessee	Dan Pallme	Amy Kosanovic	
Georgia	Meg Pirkle	Joanna Campbell	Clement Soloman, Philip Peevy, Justin Thrift
Florida	Brad Thoburn	Holly Cohen	

Non-Voting / Advisory	
FRA	Randy Brown, Jessie Samwel, Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, Natalie Williford, Doug Gascon
Consultants	Christine Fix (Mott MacDonald), Corey Hill (Kimley-Horn), Ben Chambers (Kimley-Horn), Aaron Kozuki (Kimley-Horn), Emily Grenzke (Kimley-Horn), Sophy Chen

Old Business

Julie White, SEC Chair, welcomed everyone and asked for any comments on the October 2021 meeting minutes. Julie asked for a motion to approve the October 2021 Commission meeting minutes. Motion was moved by Brent Rewis, seconded by Meg Pirkle. Ayes from VA, NC, SC, GA, FL.

New Business

Emily Grenzke from Kimley-Horn presented an update on the SEC Implementation Plan and proposed a rename of the Plan to be called the “SEC Development Strategy.” The Commission had no objections to the name change.

Kimley-Horn has completed Task 2, including the existing studies, updating the database of SEC Projects, and the integrated service and infrastructure maps. Task 4 was also completed, including the remaining gaps in ROW acquisitions and the lessons learned from Transforming Rail in Virginia Memo. Kimley-Horn presented a brief overview of the Task 4 Memo including discussing the ROW ownership of each state and their respective alignments, lessons learned gathered from the acquisition from the Transforming Rail in Virginia, and best practice case studies from two rail plans in California. Corey Hill also discussed several key points of the lessons learned gathered in Virginia.

Task 3 of the draft project delivery matrix of the grouping strategy and corridor status was presented. A corridor phasing table was presented and showed the phasing of each segment of completion. Ben Chambers followed with briefly discussing the Federal Funding Opportunities.

Jessie Samwel from FRA presented on the Interstate Rail Compact Grant Program. The program provides financial assistance to entities on interstate compacts and the opportunity to be the primary entity coordinating the development of multi-state rail networks. Applicants can only be Rail Compacts that are established under law. FRA wants to

further assist and work with entities that want to establish Rail Compacts in the future, as there are only two active compacts in the country. Award limitations are \$3 million set aside per fiscal year and maximum award of \$1 million per application. Fifty percent is the required non-federal match, and Amtrak must be the operator in the network. Sophy Chen asked when FRA would have a better interpretation of the law. FRA responded that they are not sure, but as next steps FRA will be conducting stakeholder outreach to answer these types of questions.

Doug Gascon from FRA presented an overview of the FRA Grant Programs including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and a number of other programs. Doug noted that a new program that has been expanded, called the Railroad Crossing Elimination, will promote highway or grade crossing improvement projects with \$5.5 billion in total funds. Doug explained that Class I railroad companies are not directly eligible to apply under any of the programs but can come in as a partner to the application. Doug answered questions on the CRISI grant and noted that the CRISI opportunities are for Rail Compacts, not Commissions. Under CRISI, there are no restrictions for multi-states or individuals from the Commission to jointly apply for CRISI, but the Commission on behalf of itself is not eligible.

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea from FRA presented on the administration priorities and the departmental objectives and goals. In particular, grant selections in the coming years will be focused on projects that are reducing emissions and promoting efficiencies in the networks. Rebecca noted that over the coming months FRA will be engaging with stakeholders seeking input on the challenges and success of the programs, while providing program support and information sessions for future grant funding opportunities.

Julie White asked the team how they would proceed together as a Commission and what is next in terms of goals and objectives. The team discussed the idea of forming a “service first” vision planning document that focuses on the future costs of service development that may help synchronize the corridors. Julie suggested that the NEC virtually present their Connect NEC-2035 planning document to the team for the SEC to gather ideas and ask questions about the document.

State Updates

The States presented on the following new or existing rail initiatives:

- **Washington, DC:**
 - N/A
- **Virginia:**
 - A new Governor and administration have been elected. A new Transportation Secretary was appointed, who is a long-time member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.
 - Finalized three studies for the General Assembly:
 - Long Range feasibility study for the East-West Commonwealth corridor passenger rail
 - Expansion of New River Valley to Bristol
 - Interim stop at Bedford between Roanoke and Lynchburg
 - Virginia Passenger Rail Authority closed on railroad infrastructure property from Buckingham Branch railroad.
 - Voted on an agreement with Norfolk Southern to purchase their Virginia Line passenger rail extension to the New River Valley.
 - Working with Amtrak on lessons learned with severe weather in Virginia.
- **North Carolina:**
 - Piedmont and Carolinian services continue to show strong ridership during the pandemic.
 - Charlotte Gateway Station project is 90% complete and plan to have a facility opening in October/November 2024.
 - New CCX intermodal facility in Rocky Mounty is now open.
 - Continuing to work closely with Virginia on grant application(s).
 - S-Line transit-oriented development projects and public outreach efforts are ongoing.

- **South Carolina:**
 - Managing Upstate Express project on behalf of the Ports authority and Norfolk Southern that expands capacity between Colombia and inland Port Grier is still on target to be completed in October 2023.
 - Ports Grier and Dillon are both experiencing record volumes. Looking at truck to rail opportunities and intermodal opportunities within these ports and Port of Charleston.
 - Continuing to manage the Assembly St. railroad corridor and consolidation project in Downtown Columbia. Project has almost finalized the Environmental Assessment and conceptual engineering phase in order to apply for additional funding for the construction phase of the project.
 - Provided a letter of support to Amtrak and CSX for a joint application for an S-Line Corridor rail infrastructure improvement project, which would improve 38 miles of rail corridor.
 - Awarded a \$25 million INFRA grant to construct a 25-mile rail connection from Camp Hall to an industrial site north of Charleston, which allows access to CSX's rail line connecting the Port of Charleston with Port Dillon.
 - Governor proposed with the spending of the ARPA and Cares Act Funding that they put \$1.3 billion toward NCDOT with \$100 - \$150 million of that being reoccurring. The remaining funds would go to expedite the widening of I-26.
- **Tennessee:**
 - Rail Preservation Program completed the final inspection on the support yard for the Memphis Shelby County Port. This will help build up the infrastructure at the Port for trains to support commerce and industry in the area.
 - Hired a new Rail Safety Manager in the Department and planning on one more hire in the Department that will be FRA certified.
- **Georgia:**
 - Developing the next set of upgrades and are aiming to have under contract by the middle of 2023.
 - Beginning a corridor study on the most successful excursion line and with the goal of determining what economic development opportunities are available and what connectivity there is to bring into Atlanta.
 - Continuing with reactivating one of our inactive lines and whether the line that will be worth reactivating based on what value the service will add in South Georgia.
- **Florida:**
 - Began updating the Statewide Rail Plan. Completing stakeholder interviews and starting regional workshops soon. Initially completed a rail plan in Tampa and focused on rethinking the role of passenger rail in the state. Tampa wants to move forward with commuter rail planning in the future.
 - Brightline on hold with the lease and working through it with FRA.
 - Moving forward with a pilot initiative with Indian River County and Brightline on a safety application for emerging high-speed rail.

Scheduling of Next Meeting

April 12, 2022, from 10:30am - 12:00pm

Additional Agenda Items

N/A

Action Items

- Christine Fix to schedule the C35 discussion with NEC, Commission, and technical team.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by Julie White.

*Minutes prepared by: Brett Gallagher, Mott MacDonald
Minutes submitted by: Meg Pirkle
Approved on: XXX*

These minutes will be circulated to Commission nominees, Proxies, Technical Committee members, and other attendees for comments. Any comments received within ten days of distribution will be incorporated into a final version. These meeting minutes will be formally approved at the subsequent Commission meeting.