

Regional Rail Through-Running and Interoperability Study

SEC. ____ REGIONAL RAIL THROUGH-RUNNING AND INTEROPERABILITY STUDY.

(a) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) Through-running.—The term “through-running” means passenger rail operations in which trains continue through a terminal or central business district station to destinations beyond such station, rather than terminating and reversing direction.

(2) Revenue-service through-running.—The term “revenue-service through-running” means through-running operations carrying passengers in scheduled service across a terminal or central business district station, including service that connects lines, corridors, or operators on opposite sides of such station.

(3) Regional rail interoperability.—The term “regional rail interoperability” means operational, infrastructure, rolling stock, signaling, fare, scheduling, dispatching, electrification, procurement, labor, workforce, or governance arrangements that permit integrated passenger rail service across multiple operators or jurisdictions.

(4) NEC Commission.—The term “NEC Commission” means the Northeast Corridor Commission established under section 24905 of title 49, United States Code.

(5) Anchor institution.—The term “anchor institution” means a major employer, hospital, university, research institution, airport, convention center, cultural institution, public agency facility, business district, or other institution whose regional access materially affects employment, essential services, economic development, or public welfare.

(b) Study Required.—

(1) In general.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall initiate a study on regional rail through-running and interoperability at major passenger rail terminals.

(2) NEC coordination.—For any portion of the study concerning the Northeast Corridor, the Secretary shall carry out the study in consultation with the NEC Commission, Amtrak, affected commuter rail agencies, affected States, affected metropolitan planning organizations, and other stakeholders described in subsection (e).

(3) Coordination with ongoing Federal Railroad Administration efforts.—In carrying out the study required under this section, the Secretary may incorporate, coordinate with, or rely upon existing or ongoing Federal Railroad Administration analysis, planning, modeling, or technical work relating to Northeast Corridor service planning, regional rail interoperability, or revenue-service through-running, including the in-progress Service Optimization Study for New York Penn Station and the New York City metropolitan area.

(4) No effect on existing projects.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to delay, prohibit, approve, disapprove, or condition any project, procurement, environmental review, financing agreement, grant agreement, credit-assistance agreement, station modernization activity, state-of-good-repair activity, or station-area development activity.

(c) Study Contents.—The study required under subsection (b) shall evaluate the following:

(1) Terminals.—Existing and potential through-running and regional rail interoperability opportunities at major passenger rail terminals, including—

(A) Boston South Station and North Station;

(B) Washington Union Station;

(C) Chicago Union Station, Ogilvie Transportation Center, LaSalle Street Station, and Millennium Station;

(D) other terminals determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(2) Service and operating factors.—The potential effects of revenue-service through-running and regional rail interoperability on—

(A) passenger capacity;

(B) train throughput;

(C) platform dwell time;

(D) schedule reliability;

(E) resilience and service recovery during disruptions;

(F) operating costs;

(G) capital costs;

(H) avoided or deferred capital costs;

(I) vehicle miles traveled;

(J) greenhouse gas emissions;

(K) accessibility;

(L) passenger circulation;

(M) labor practices and workforce requirements;

(N) labor-market access;

(O) job-shed reliability;

(P) passenger-market expansion;

(Q) access to anchor institutions and essential services; and

(R) return on public investment.

(3) Infrastructure and equipment factors.—Infrastructure, equipment, and systems modifications that may be necessary to support revenue-service through-running and regional rail interoperability, including—

(A) construction of new rail links;

(B) modernization of interlockings and junctions;

(C) electrification and electrification compatibility;

(D) signaling modernization;

(E) communications systems;

(F) dispatching arrangements;

(G) platform compatibility;

(H) vertical circulation and passenger-flow improvements;

(I) rolling stock compatibility;

(J) yard, storage, maintenance, and turnback requirements;

(K) accessibility modifications; and

(L) fare, ticketing, and passenger information systems.

(4) Service patterns.—Service plans for all-day regional rail, including weekday peak, weekday off-peak, evening, weekend, and overnight service patterns, and not limited to peak-hour terminal throughput.

(5) Governance and institutional barriers.—Governance and institutional barriers to revenue-service through-running and regional rail interoperability, including—

(A) joint service planning;

(B) operating agreements;

(C) access agreements;

(D) interoperating agreements;

(E) shared or compatible rolling-stock standards;

(F) data-sharing protocols;

(G) dispatching coordination;

- (H) procurement coordination;
- (I) cost-sharing arrangements;
- (J) fare and ticketing integration; and
- (K) mechanisms that may allow near-term implementation while preserving future institutional flexibility.

(6) Labor and workforce.—Labor, workforce, training, crew-qualification, craft-jurisdiction, collective-bargaining, rail safety, and workforce-transition issues associated with revenue-service through-running, regional rail interoperability, and demonstration service.

(7) Planning and procurement.—Planning, procurement, staffing, and project-delivery reforms that may reduce costs, preserve institutional knowledge, standardize recurring components, or improve delivery of interoperable regional rail infrastructure.

(8) Best practices.—Domestic and international best practices related to regional rail interoperability, revenue-service through-running, all-day service, rolling stock procurement, electrification, signaling, interlocking modernization, fare integration, passenger information, service planning, governance, and capital delivery, and must include an examination of operational practices and agreements in cities and regions including—

- (A) London
- (B) Paris
- (C) Tokyo
- (D) Melbourne
- (E) other cities determined appropriate by the Secretary

(9) Pilot and demonstration opportunities.—Potential pilot projects, demonstration service, or phased implementation opportunities that may be eligible for Federal support under existing authorities.

(d) Modeling and Public Documentation.—

(1) Modeling documentation.—To the maximum extent practicable, the study shall identify the model types, analytical methods, service scenarios, assumptions, input data categories, calibration methods, output measures, and limitations used to evaluate alternatives.

(2) Existing-conditions validation.—Any rail operations model, passenger-flow model, service-plan model, economic-development model, labor-market-access model, passenger-market model, procurement model, cost model, staffing model, or system-wide model used to

support the study shall be validated against existing conditions to the maximum extent practicable.

(3) Public release.—The Secretary shall make publicly available, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with applicable law, nonproprietary modeling assumptions, model types, scenario definitions, output categories, calibration methods, limitations, and alternatives-analysis standards used in the study.

(4) Protected information.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require the disclosure of proprietary financial information, confidential commercial information, security-sensitive information, personally identifiable information, or information protected from disclosure under any other provision of law.

(e) Consultation.—In carrying out the study required under subsection (b), the Secretary shall consult with—

- (1) the Federal Railroad Administration;
- (2) the Federal Transit Administration, where station access, local transit integration, accessibility, fare integration, or first-mile and last-mile connectivity are materially implicated;
- (3) the NEC Commission;
- (4) Amtrak;
- (5) commuter rail agencies;
- (6) State departments of transportation;
- (7) metropolitan planning organizations;
- (8) units of local government and regional planning bodies with jurisdiction over affected station areas, yards, rights-of-way, or connecting transit services;
- (9) labor organizations representing rail employees;
- (10) disability and accessibility representatives;
- (11) passenger and transit advocacy organizations;
- (12) independent technical experts, with appropriate disclosure of relevant conflicts of interest;
- (13) representatives of major employers, hospitals, universities, airports, business improvement districts, chambers of commerce, research institutions, cultural institutions, and other anchor institutions materially affected by regional rail access; and
- (14) other stakeholders determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(f) Report to Congress.—

(1) Interim implementation memorandum.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the NEC Commission, shall submit to the committees described in paragraph (3), and make publicly available, an interim memorandum concerning the study framework.

(2) Contents of interim memorandum.—The interim memorandum required under paragraph (1) shall describe, to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) the alternatives to be evaluated;

(B) the nonproprietary modeling methods, model types, service scenarios, assumptions, and output categories to be used;

(C) the manner in which the study will evaluate revenue-service through-running implementation alternatives;

(D) the service-pattern assumptions to be used for all-day regional rail;

(E) labor, workforce, and crew-qualification issues requiring further consultation;

(F) coordination with any ongoing Federal Railroad Administration service-planning or corridor-analysis efforts relevant to regional rail through-running and interoperability; and

(G) any additional information the Secretary determines appropriate.

(3) Final report.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the study is initiated, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing the results of the study and recommendations for legislative or administrative action.

(4) Public availability.—The Secretary shall make the final report under paragraph (3) publicly available.

(g) Use of Existing Authorities and Funds.—

(1) No new authorization of appropriations.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section.

(2) Existing funds.—The Secretary may carry out this section using amounts otherwise made available to the Department of Transportation.

(3) Existing planning authorities.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of the Secretary, the NEC Commission, Amtrak, a State, or a commuter rail agency to use otherwise available planning, project-development, environmental-review, capital-investment, or technical-assistance authorities for activities consistent with this section.

(h) Rule of Construction.—

(1) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Secretary, Amtrak, the NEC Commission, a State, a commuter rail agency, or any other entity to implement revenue-service through-running, regional rail interoperability, a pilot project, demonstration service, station modernization, station expansion, station-area development, or transit-oriented development.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit or delay Amtrak, the Secretary, the NEC Commission, a State, a commuter rail agency, or any public or private partner from advancing station modernization, safety, accessibility, state-of-good-repair, passenger-circulation, rail-oriented development, transit-oriented development, or other rail improvement activities.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter, impair, supersede, or preempt any collective-bargaining agreement, railroad labor protection obligation, employee protective arrangement, craft jurisdiction, or rights or obligations under the Railway Labor Act.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any obligation under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 or any other Federal environmental law.