

Strengthening the Federal/State Partnership on Passenger Rail

Congressional Testimony of
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Good afternoon Chairman Denham, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Committee. I very much appreciate the invitation to appear before you this afternoon. The purpose of my testimony is to discuss Amtrak's financial and operational performance, and underscore the new and emerging partnerships between the federal government, Amtrak, and the states.

As you know, it is an opportune time for this hearing given the expiration of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) this September. Among other things, the law laid out a new vision for intermetropolitan passenger rail in the U.S. that emphasized better performance—both financially and operationally—and demanded a new kind of commitment from Amtrak's state partners. States now share the operating costs for most short-distance rail corridors that stretch 750 miles or less from end to end. Today, these routes are Amtrak's high-performers, carrying around 85 percent of travelers.

The examination of the costs and performance for passenger rail, then, should pay close attention to these partnerships. In particular, the ways in which states have integrated passenger rail in their overall transportation networks, developed their own solutions to meeting funding gaps, and conducted bottom-up problem solving, all provide potentially catalytic lessons the nation should build on going forward.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nationally, intermetropolitan passenger rail ridership is on the rise. From 1997 to 2012, Amtrak ridership grew by 55.1 percent and now carries over 31 million riders annually, an all-time high.¹ This increase surpassed both population growth (17.1 percent) and GDP growth (37.2 percent) over the same span, while outpacing the growth observed across all other major transportation modes, including domestic aviation (20.0 percent).

The nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas drove almost all (90.0 percent) of this growth (Table 1.) Eight of those metros more than tripled their ridership since 1997 including: Dallas, Lancaster, Harrisburg, Oklahoma City, and Boston. Other metro areas with large ridership gains include Modesto, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Indianapolis, Greensboro, Milwaukee, St. Louis and Bridgeport.²

¹ These figures reflect the modern history of Amtrak starting in 1997, the same year as the signing of the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act.

² Brookings' analysis focuses on entire metropolitan area statistics for passenger rail rather than individual stations or cities.

Table 1: Amtrak Ridership, Fiscal Years 1997 and 2012, and Population, Calendar Year 2011

Geography	1997		2012		2011	
	Ridership*	Share	Ridership*	Share	Population	Share
TOTAL	40,282,852	100.0%	62,481,130	100.0%	313,910,777	100.0%
Non-Metro/Micro	513,706	1.3%	686,393	1.1%	24,649,462	7.9%
Micropolitan Areas	884,499	2.2%	1,625,536	2.6%	30,943,552	9.9%
Other Metropolitan Areas	4,202,729	10.4%	5,316,712	8.5%	56,592,916	18.0%
100 Largest Metropolitan Areas	34,681,919	86.1%	54,852,489	87.8%	201,724,847	64.3%
50 Largest Metropolitan Areas	31,175,876	77.4%	48,210,938	77.2%	166,033,092	52.9%
25 Largest Metropolitan Areas	28,197,816	70.0%	43,163,838	69.1%	127,027,407	40.5%
10 Largest Metropolitan Areas	22,312,105	55.4%	32,926,198	52.7%	80,439,034	25.6%
5 Largest Metropolitan Areas	17,354,655	43.1%	23,535,255	37.7%	53,524,167	17.1%

* In this table, ridership measured as total boardings and alightings
 Source: Brookings analysis of Amtrak and Census data.

Each of these metros benefit from being served by one or more of Amtrak's 29 so-called short-distance routes. Since short-distance routes often serve as the primary connectors between metropolitan areas and their regional neighbors, these routes have accounted for the highest shares of ridership.³ In fact, the 26 routes spanning 400 miles or less—a commonly accepted distance for optimal rail ridership—carried 82.9 percent of Amtrak's ridership in 2012.⁴ These same routes also made up 90.3 percent of national ridership gains since 1997. The 15 long-distance routes, by comparison, carry a much smaller share of national ridership—15.2 percent—while providing more extensive service to rural and non-metro areas (Table 2.)

Table 2: Amtrak Ridership, by Route Length, Fiscal Years 1997 to 2012

Corridor Length	1997		2012		Change 1997-2012	
	Ridership	Share	Ridership	Share	Ridership	Percent
Under 400 Miles	15,497,167	78.6%	25,857,883	82.9%	10,366,716	66.9%
400 – 750 Miles	476,000	2.4%	600,511	1.9%	124,511	26.2%
Over 750 Miles	3,741,100	19.0%	4,736,187	15.2%	996,187	26.6%
TOTAL	19,708,167	100.0%	31,194,581	100.0%	11,486,414	58.3%

These corridor statistics exclude all special trains, special buses, and connective bus service
 Source: Brookings analysis of Amtrak data

Even with growing levels of ridership on both short-distance and long-distance routes, Amtrak—like most other transportation modes—remains reliant on federal subsidies. PRIIA sought to rationalize this long-standing

³ Brookings' analysis subdivides routes via their distance. However, since routes' distances vary based on each departure's origin and destination stations, we used a weighted distance for each. We created this weighted distance by manually coding the typical number of weekday departures for each route, subdivided by the particular departure's distance. We then combined these departures by count and distance, using a basic weighting function.

⁴ Academic literature shows that the appropriate threshold of short-distance should be no more than 400 miles because, under optimal conditions, this is the maximum distance for rail to assume a significant portion of air travel's market share. See, e.g.,: Mar González-Savignat, "Competition in Air Transport: The Case of the High Speed Train," *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, Vol. 38(1): 2004, pp. 77-108; Nicole Adler, Chris Nash, and Eric Pels, "High Speed Rail and Air Transport Competition," Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper, TI 2008-103/3.

dynamic by calling on states to work more closely with Amtrak. Among its provisions, PRIIA allowed for the restructuring of debt and loans, established metrics and benchmarking across multiple operational categories, and called for the development of state rail plans.

Perhaps most significantly, given the central role played by short-distance routes, PRIIA aimed to establish a consistent level of state support. The law required Amtrak and the states to develop a uniform cost structure for all routes 750 miles or less outside the Northeast Corridor (NEC), which would “establish and allocate the operating and capital costs of providing intercity rail passenger service.”⁵

Although Amtrak traditionally covered many of the costs associated with short-distance routes, ranging from rolling stock to track maintenance, 15 states paid at least a portion of the operating expenses for 21 different routes in order to augment the rail service they would otherwise receive. From 2007 to 2011, these state contributions totaled nearly \$850 million (Table 3).

Some states devised their own agreements to share support for certain routes, such as Illinois and Wisconsin’s 25/75 percent split for the *Hiawatha* service, and Oklahoma and Texas’ 50/50 percent split for the *Heartland Flyer*. Other routes, despite crossing state borders, are only supported by one state. For example, while the *Downeaster* traverses three separate states in New England, Maine is the only sponsoring state. North Carolina, likewise, is the only sponsoring state for the *Carolinian*, despite the fact that this route extends from Charlotte to New York City.

Table 3. States Ranked by Operating Support for Amtrak Routes, Fiscal Years 2007-2011

Sponsoring State	Number of Supported Routes	Total Support 2007-2011 (in thousands)
California	3	\$400,169
Illinois	3.25	\$134,529
Pennsylvania	1	\$40,487
Michigan	2	\$35,362
Missouri	1	\$33,539
Washington	0.5	\$32,431
Oregon	0.5	\$32,431
Wisconsin	0.75	\$27,532
New York	1	\$23,180
North Carolina	2	\$22,167
Maine	1	\$22,137
Vermont	2	\$19,910
Oklahoma	0.5	\$8,771
Texas	0.5	\$8,771
Virginia	2	\$135
TOTAL		\$841,549

Source: Brookings analysis of internal Amtrak financial data

⁵ Source (entire paragraph): Federal Railroad Administration, "Overview, Highlights, and Summary of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008," 2009.

After PRIIA passed in 2008, Amtrak collaborated with an appointed States Working Group to define the new standardized methodology in a clear and equitable manner. The Surface Transportation Board recently approved the new funding formula, which will take effect this October.⁶

Since then, states have stepped up and identified their own unique solutions to support passenger rail. New York State recently assigned \$44 million in its current budget to support its obligation for the *Empire Corridor*. Virginia's new transportation package includes over \$50 million in dedicated revenue for capital and operating costs for passenger rail. Pennsylvania recently agreed to contribute \$3.8 million per year to support the *Pennsylvanian*, keeping service uninterrupted in the western part of the state. Vermont is budgeting an additional \$3.1 million for its share of the *Vermont*. California's revised budget proposal now includes an additional \$18.6 million to cover the operating requirements of the *Pacific Surfliner*. Oregon uses a dedicated portion of revenue generated from personal license plate fees to support its service, while Washington State taps motor vehicles sales taxes and car rental fees.

II. REVENUES AND COSTS

In a recent Brookings report, my colleagues Adie Tomer, Joseph Kane, and I examined how operating costs and revenues varied between different short-distance and long-distance corridors.⁷

While the financial measures we used only reflects revenues and costs for corridor-specific operations assigned by Amtrak—and consequently excludes non-passenger related revenues and other capital costs, such as depreciation—they highlight a clear disparity in the operational efficiency between short-distance routes and long-distance routes.⁸ Driving this disparity, as I have mentioned previously, are the significantly higher ridership figures carried by short-distance routes and the sizable funding support many of these routes receive from their state partners.

Indeed, short-distance routes (all under 750 miles) had a positive operating balance of \$30.3 million in 2011, compared to the negative operating balance of \$597.6 million found among long-distance routes. Although total operating costs for these short-distance routes (\$1.62 billion) exceeded those for long-distance routes (\$1.1 billion), they had much higher operating revenues overall: \$1.65 billion versus \$518.4 million. These figures include state operating support (Table 4).

It is important to note that these figures include revenues and costs for two NEC routes, the *Northeast Regional* and *Acela*, which ran the highest positive operating balances in 2011 though they do not receive direct state operating support. Their combined positive operating balance of \$205.4 million outweighed the combined negative operating balance of \$175.1 million among the 27 other short-distance corridors. The only other routes with a positive operating balance in 2011 included the *Adirondack* (\$1.3 million) and the newly formed *Washington-Lynchburg* route (\$3.3 million). Still, the negative operating balances among these remaining short-distance routes were relatively modest.

⁶ States Working Group, "Establishing Standard Pricing Policies, Annual Operating Costs, and Capital Charges," 2011.

⁷ Robert Puentes, Adie Tomer, and Joseph Kane, "A New Alignment: Strengthening America's Commitment to Passenger Rail," Brookings, 2013.

⁸ Brookings analysis of corridor financial performance includes numbers for the national train system, but these do not reconcile with Amtrak's annual Consolidated Statement of Operations. The specific missing elements are the revenues and expenses captured under Ancillary Customers, Freight and Other Customers, Net Depreciation, Net Interest Expenses, and State Capital Payments. For more information, see "Financial Performance of Routes" within Amtrak's September Monthly Performance reports.

Table 4. Financial Performance by Route Length, Fiscal Year 2011

Corridor Length	Financials (\$ mil)			Number of Routes	
	Revenue	Costs	Balance	Total	Share
Under 400 Miles	\$1,587.7	\$1,541.1	\$46.6	26	59.1%
400 - 750 Miles	\$62.6	\$78.9	(\$16.3)	3	6.8%
Over 750 Miles	\$518.4	\$1,116.0	(\$597.6)	15	34.1%
TOTAL	\$2,168.7	\$2,736.0	(\$567.3)	44	100.0%

*These corridor statistics exclude all special trains, special buses, and connective bus service
Source: Brookings analysis of Amtrak data*

States contributed almost \$850 million in operating support over this five-year span, although the amount varied widely depending on the specific state, route, and level of service in question. California, for instance, provided more than \$400 million from 2007 to 2011 to support three different routes, including \$119.1 million for the *Capitol Corridor*, \$129.6 million for the *Pacific Surfliner*, and \$151.5 million for the *San Joaquin*. In contrast, New York provided \$23.2 million to support the *Adirondack*, averaging \$4.6 million per year, while Pennsylvania provided \$40.5 million to support the *Keystone*, averaging \$8.1 million per year.

In several cases, through this support, states contributed the majority of a route's total operating revenue. For example, support from Oklahoma and Texas accounted for nearly two-thirds of the *Heartland Flyer's* total revenue in 2011, the highest share among all routes. By doing so, they enabled the route to have a negative operating balance of only \$2.7 million; without their support, the route's negative operating balance would have stood at \$6.5 million. New York, similarly, provided over half of the *Adirondack's* total revenue, allowing it to run a positive operating balance of \$1.3 million rather than a negative operating balance of \$6.3 million without its support. On the other hand, the *Carolinian* only derives 9.6 percent of revenue from state support.

In total, by adding this support to their other operating revenues, the 24 short-distance routes spanning less than 400 miles (outside the Northeast Corridor) improved their financial performance from a \$351.2 million negative operating balance in 2011 to a \$166.1 million negative balance, more than cutting their annual loss in half.

III. IMPLICATIONS

Scrutiny should be applied evenly to the entire American transportation network and not just to Amtrak alone. Much attention is given to the fact that other non-private passenger transportation modes are not profitable, nor do they concern themselves with being so. Governments at all levels invest much more heavily in the key elements of the transportation network, whether through direct grants for highways, tax incentives for airlines, or appropriations for public transit and, overall, Amtrak covers a relatively large share of its costs. As such, I believe that, like other transportation modes, "profitability" for Amtrak is not in and of itself the primary goal.

Yet there are several key implications that help us understand where it is efficient and effective, why it is successful or not, and what states and the federal government should consider.

A tale of two systems: operational efficiency versus geographic equity. Although a national system, America's passenger rail network is made up of two distinct types of routes: those less than 400 miles and those greater than 400 miles.⁹ The former typically enjoy direct state support (even before the federal PRIIA legislation) and

⁹ Some argue that the *Acela* and *Northeast Regional* routes constitute a different rail system given its unique characteristics and the fact that Amtrak owns most of the tracks and, as a result, interference with freight rail is minimal compared to the rest of the network.

always serve at least one large metropolitan area. In total, these 26 corridors carried 82.9 percent of all system riders in 2012. The latter represent the geographic equity portion of the network. These routes travel for vast stretches and offer service to many smaller, relatively isolated communities with limited intermetropolitan alternatives. Together, they carry 17.1 percent of Amtrak's passengers and constitute 43.6 percent of its route-associated operating costs.

Making metro connections: frequent service between large, regional metropolitan pairs. Having a direct connection between major metropolitan areas is an important driver of Amtrak ridership and a key attribute of the short-distance routes. Several long-distance corridors also benefit from shorter segments connecting major metropolitan centers. The *Empire Builder* runs from Chicago to Seattle, but passes through metropolitan Milwaukee, Madison, and Minneapolis along the way. Over 120,000 passengers each year travel this short segment between Chicago and Minneapolis, and do so without the multiple daily departures typical of most short-distance corridors. Similarly, the *City of New Orleans* runs between New Orleans and Chicago, but over 75,000 passengers only travel along the roughly 400 miles between New Orleans and Memphis.

Policy and partnerships: the state commitment to intermetropolitan passenger rail. Prior to the federal PRIIA legislation in 2008, 15 states already recognized the importance of intermetropolitan rail and voluntarily subsidized operations for augmented service on 21 routes. Other states—primarily those along the Northeast Corridor—contributed capital investments in stations and other improvements. In many cases, these contributions allow for additional rail service over and above Amtrak's base route system and for more frequent and efficient trains, which make the service more attractive and drive up ridership and ticket revenue. PRIIA expands this relationship with its new formula for state support of short-distance routes, requiring states to contribute enough annual formula funds that each route is operationally breakeven. By providing broader financial support, states have more "skin in the game" and are motivated to target investments more precisely and develop plans more comprehensively, better tailoring maintenance needs and capital improvements to local demands.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The remarkable shift toward federal-state collaboration on Amtrak should not be underestimated. While still a national program, the reformed roles for Amtrak and states are not representative of transportation's late 20th century federalism model where the federal government provides resources that rain down unencumbered to the state and metropolitan level. Rather, PRIIA encapsulates a new 21st century model that challenges our state and metropolitan leaders to develop deep and innovative approaches to solve the most pressing transportation problems.

However, more needs to be done.

With the economy in the midst of a slow recovery and state budgets adjusting to tighter times, every public investment should come under careful analysis and inspection. Yet, an emphasis on fiscal responsibility should not automatically mean scaling back of intermetropolitan rail investments or operations. In fact, these investments are as important as ever. Rather, states and the federal government should consider a range of recommendations to enable them to marshal the resources they already have and ensure that state efforts are more coordinated and efficient in the future.

As with other areas of infrastructure, recommendations for passenger rail tend to devolve into calls for increased federal spending. Such a call is probably justified especially over the long term for myriad reasons, including Washington's historically outsized support of other transportation modes. However, the recommendations below

focus on how Washington and the states can operate better during this remarkably challenging time of fiscal constraint and overall aversion to increased funding.

Continue the evolution of long-distance intermetropolitan rail service. Ensuring an efficient and effective passenger rail network in a constrained fiscal environment will require building upon the federal-state partnership initiated in PRIIA and applying it broadly across the network. In this way, it should be a top priority to expand the requirement for state operating support to include the long-distance routes. The goal should not be to eliminate routes by "offloading" responsibility from the federal government to states but to strengthen the partnership and reaffirm the commitment of states to long-distance routes over time.

State and federal stakeholders have undertaken a rigorous and complicated exercise to establish standard pricing policies and cost methodology for short-distance routes in accordance with the federal law. It is reasonable to apply a similar approach to long-distance routes, as well, through careful and collaborative work with state leaders and freight rail companies. This should be informed by the evaluative criteria Amtrak is required to establish for the long-distance routes, recognizing the symbiotic relationship and traffic that the short- and long-distance routes add to each other.

I recognize the long-distance routes are more complex, given their length and the fact that they operate in more than one state. A negotiated approach should recognize that long-distance routes do not provide the same service to all states along its route, nor do they serve the same function as short-distance routes. For example, the *Lake Shore Limited* between Boston and Chicago only travels through Ohio during low-ridership overnight hours, but it serves other states during typical travel hours. A refined approach must also recognize the unique national connectivity these routes provide, especially to certain isolated rural communities.

Provide greater flexibility from Washington. In exchange for greater responsibility from Washington, states should have added flexibility in how they allocate existing funds. For example, current federal law allows states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to transfer funds between highway and transit programs. Among other benefits, this freedom of financing greatly assists in bottom-up problem solving and gives additional consideration to alternative solutions that achieve a more balanced transportation network. States and MPOs should gain the same flexibility when they support operating or capital investments for intermetropolitan passenger rail.¹⁰ Current federal law allows states to use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program dollars for rail operations, but the U.S. Department of Transportation limits this use to only three years. That cap should be removed. Federal policy should also expand CMAQ's passenger rail flexibility to MPOs that receive suballocated funds from their states.

Finalize the national and state rail plans. One of PRIIA's most important elements requires states to develop passenger rail plans as a condition to receive funding for capital projects. These plans are integral to the development of a multimodal passenger and freight rail network. The federal government recently released draft guidance and comments from stakeholders are currently under consideration. Just as critical is the development of a national rail plan, as called for by PRIIA. Such a plan is not only important to develop objective methodologies that guide federal investments, but it also has important implications for individual states whose plans must be consistent with the national one. While the U.S. Department of Transportation released a draft national rail plan in October 2009, the lack of a finalized plan continues to present uncertainties to stakeholders. The completion of the final plan should expedited.

¹⁰ States would undoubtedly make better partners by removing the roads-only exclusion for their gasoline tax revenues. By committing a portion of revenues to other modes beyond highways, states would increase their ability to consider the entire transportation system, rather than isolated parts.

V. CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, I firmly believe we can continue to strengthen passenger rail in the United States by enhancing the federal-state partnership. While Amtrak has done a lot to remake itself in recent years, states need to continue to reaffirm their commitment for the model to be sustainable. The upcoming reauthorization and the finalization of a national rail plan, coupled with increased attention on the role of passenger rail in states, make this the right time to focus on the future of Amtrak, despite the fiscally constrained times.

The views expressed in these written remarks are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the staff, officers, or trustees of The Brookings Institution.

Appendix A: Amtrak Station and Ridership Statistics by Metropolitan Area

Metropolitan Area	Active Stations	Ridership Totals *			2012 System Ridership Share
		1997	2012	Change	
Akron, OH	0	---	---	---	---
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	3	620,353	862,737	39.1%	1.4%
Albuquerque, NM	1	47,906	78,324	63.5%	0.1%
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	0	---	---	---	---
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	1	81,259	104,854	29.0%	0.2%
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	0	---	---	---	---
Austin-Round Rock, TX	3	11,161	53,911	383.0%	0.1%
Bakersfield, CA	2	319,283	528,175	65.4%	0.8%
Baltimore-Towson, MD	3	1,185,856	1,776,500	49.8%	2.8%
Baton Rouge, LA	0	---	---	---	---
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	1	28,955	48,734	68.3%	0.1%
Boise City-Nampa, ID	0	3,455	---	---	---
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	10	1,018,297	3,167,716	211.1%	5.1%
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	2	232,447	478,149	105.7%	0.8%
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	3	183,619	195,247	6.3%	0.3%
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	0	---	---	---	---
Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	1	49,629	84,956	71.2%	0.1%
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	3	107,766	213,457	98.1%	0.3%
Chattanooga, TN-GA	0	---	---	---	---
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	11	2,289,103	3,757,555	64.1%	6.0%
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	1	19,235	16,209	-15.7%	0.0%
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	2	49,269	57,233	16.2%	0.1%
Colorado Springs, CO	0	---	---	---	---
Columbia, SC	2	26,967	41,276	53.1%	0.1%
Columbus, OH	0	---	---	---	---
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	3	34,651	201,996	482.9%	0.3%
Dayton, OH	0	---	---	---	---
Denver-Aurora, CO	1	143,098	113,393	-20.8%	0.2%
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	0	---	---	---	---
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	7	229,100	253,457	10.6%	0.4%
El Paso, TX	1	11,117	12,329	10.9%	0.0%
Fresno, CA	1	214,134	394,074	84.0%	0.6%
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	1	32,618	56,832	74.2%	0.1%
Greensboro-High Point, NC	2	68,557	173,246	152.7%	0.3%
Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC	2	21,184	18,372	-13.3%	0.0%
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	2	186,938	644,755	244.9%	1.0%
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	5	236,047	299,163	26.7%	0.5%
Honolulu, HI	0	---	---	---	---
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	1	16,380	20,327	24.1%	0.0%

Metropolitan Area	Active Stations	Ridership Totals *			2012 System Ridership Share
		1997	2012	Change	
Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	1	11,811	34,863	195.2%	0.1%
Jackson, MS	2	35,006	51,764	47.9%	0.1%
Jacksonville, FL	1	91,599	77,512	-15.4%	0.1%
Kansas City, MO-KS	3	128,609	201,238	56.5%	0.3%
Knoxville, TN	0	---	---	---	---
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	2	28,541	50,195	75.9%	0.1%
Lancaster, PA	3	207,073	740,587	257.6%	1.2%
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	0	---	---	---	---
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	1	8,328	24,036	188.6%	0.0%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	14	1,997,381	3,424,851	71.5%	5.5%
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY-IN	0	---	---	---	---
Madison, WI	3	22,686	36,549	61.1%	0.1%
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	0	---	---	---	---
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	1	37,912	73,116	92.9%	0.1%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	6	215,192	300,357	39.6%	0.5%
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	2	357,687	795,850	122.5%	1.3%
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	1	101,168	120,515	19.1%	0.2%
Modesto, CA	2	82,163	143,534	74.7%	0.2%
Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	0	---	---	---	---
New Haven-Milford, CT	3	276,021	808,300	192.8%	1.3%
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	2	190,842	229,929	20.5%	0.4%
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	8	8,830,040	10,855,647	22.9%	17.4%
North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, FL	0	---	---	---	---
Ogden-Clearfield, UT	0	5,445	---	---	---
Oklahoma City, OK **	3	0	76,556	237.5%	0.1%
Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	1	19,682	22,794	15.8%	0.0%
Orlando-Kissimmee, FL	4	427,748	518,574	21.2%	0.8%
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	5	145,562	221,234	52.0%	0.4%
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	0	---	---	---	---
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	11	4,203,480	5,295,206	26.0%	8.5%
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ **	1	0	10,804	931.9%	0.0%
Pittsburgh, PA	4	135,024	152,048	12.6%	0.2%
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	3	410,670	778,791	89.6%	1.2%
Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	2	161,365	265,729	64.7%	0.4%
Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	3	368,117	874,436	137.5%	1.4%
Provo-Orem, UT	1	2,242	5,675	153.1%	0.0%
Raleigh-Cary, NC	4	133,611	258,374	93.4%	0.4%
Richmond, VA	4	267,580	427,087	59.6%	0.7%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	7	30,542	53,196	74.2%	0.1%
Rochester, NY	1	114,710	144,703	26.1%	0.2%

Metropolitan Area	Active Stations	Ridership Totals *			2012 System Ridership Share
		1997	2012	Change	
Sacramento--Arden-Arcade--Roseville, CA	6	592,236	1,760,373	197.2%	2.8%
St. Louis, MO-IL	5	236,109	499,346	111.5%	0.8%
Salt Lake City, UT	1	29,672	42,502	43.2%	0.1%
San Antonio, TX	1	43,861	70,161	60.0%	0.1%
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	4	1,214,056	1,536,298	26.5%	2.5%
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	9	964,369	2,058,032	113.4%	3.3%
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	3	148,871	357,646	140.2%	0.6%
Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	0	---	---	---	---
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	6	567,380	903,882	59.3%	1.4%
Springfield, MA	2	134,766	156,550	16.2%	0.3%
Stockton, CA	3	194,937	326,421	67.4%	0.5%
Syracuse, NY	2	111,189	154,053	38.6%	0.2%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	1	32,242	150,844	367.8%	0.2%
Toledo, OH	1	70,374	69,275	-1.6%	0.1%
Tucson, AZ	1	23,524	23,896	1.6%	0.0%
Tulsa, OK	0	---	---	---	---
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	2	147,949	195,263	32.0%	0.3%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	11	3,626,322	5,797,689	59.9%	9.3%
Wichita, KS	1	10,878	14,131	29.9%	0.0%
Worcester, MA	1	15,667	8,900	-43.2%	0.0%
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	0	1,296	---	---	---

* Some discontinued metro areas do not include reported ridership from 1997

** These metros did not start service until after 1997, meaning change is based on their initial service years

Source: Brookings analysis of Amtrak and Census data

Appendix B: Amtrak Route Performance

Route	Weighted Distance (miles)	Average Weekday Departures	Ridership			2011 Operating Finances (\$ mil)				
			1997	2012	Change *	State Support	Other Revenue	Costs **	Balance **	
New Haven-Springfield	62	5	0	384,834	---	N/A	\$11.6	\$24.4	(\$12.9)	
Hiawatha	86	7	361,000	838,355	132.2%	\$7.7	\$16.0	\$25.9	(\$2.2)	
Downeaster	111	6	0	541,757	---	\$5.3	\$7.2	\$13.5	(\$1.0)	
Capitol Corridor	113	15	490,000	1,746,397	256.4%	\$28.1	\$27.4	\$69.6	(\$14.1)	
Empire (NYP-ALB)	141	9	1,057,000	1,062,715	0.5%	N/A	\$40.9	\$71.9	(\$31.0)	
Washington-Lynchburg	173	1	0	184,907	---	N/A	\$10.1	\$6.9	\$3.3	
Piedmont	173	2	43,000	162,657	278.3%	\$2.7	\$2.5	\$7.1	(\$1.9)	
Pere Marquette	176	1	65,172	109,321	67.7%	\$2.6	\$3.4	\$6.8	(\$0.8)	
Pacific Surfliner	183	12	1,635,000	2,640,342	61.5%	\$27.2	\$58.1	\$115.4	(\$30.1)	
Washington-Newport News	187	2	0	623,864	---	-\$0.1	\$30.9	\$31.3	(\$0.5)	
Keystone	195	13	442,000	1,420,392	221.4%	\$9.2	\$29.7	\$47.0	(\$8.2)	
Hoosier State	196	1	0	36,669	---	N/A	\$0.9	\$4.9	(\$4.0)	
Heartland Flyer	206	1	0	87,873	---	\$3.8	\$2.1	\$8.7	(\$2.7)	
Ethan Allen	241	1	29,000	54,376	87.5%	\$1.5	\$2.6	\$6.6	(\$2.5)	
Chicago-Quincy (IL Zephyr/Carl Sandburg)	258	2	82,000	232,592	183.6%	\$8.5	\$5.9	\$16.8	(\$2.4)	
Cascades	262	5	335,000	845,099	152.3%	\$12.6	\$37.8	\$66.1	(\$15.6)	
Kansas City-St. Louis (MO River Runner)	283	2	156,000	195,885	25.6%	\$8.6	\$5.3	\$14.1	(\$0.3)	
Chicago-St. Louis (Lincoln Service)	284	4	256,000	597,519	133.4%	\$14.9	\$13.4	\$32.4	(\$4.1)	
San Joaquin	303	6	688,000	1,144,616	66.4%	\$32.8	\$38.3	\$77.9	(\$6.8)	
Wolverine	304	3	418,491	484,138	15.7%	N/A	\$20.2	\$37.2	(\$17.0)	
Acela	308	25	0	3,395,354	---	N/A	\$510.3	\$331.6	\$178.8	
Chicago-Carbondale (Illini/Saiuki)	309	2	89,000	325,255	265.5%	\$6.7	\$9.4	\$20.6	(\$4.4)	
Blue Water	319	1	123,504	189,193	53.2%	\$5.4	\$6.3	\$14.0	(\$2.3)	
Northeast Regional	330	22	7,041,000	8,014,175	13.8%	\$0.2	\$505.1	\$477.3	\$28.0	
Albany-Niagara Falls-Toronto	347	3	0	407,729	---	N/A	\$25.0	\$30.9	(\$5.9)	
Adirondack	381	1	99,000	131,869	33.2%	\$7.6	\$7.0	\$13.3	\$1.3	

Route	Weighted Distance (miles)	Average Weekday Departures	Ridership		2011 Operating Finances (\$ mil)				
			1997	2012	Change *	State Support	Other Revenue	Costs **	Balance **
Pennsylvanian	444	1	160,000	212,006	32.5%	N/A	\$9.4	\$16.8	(\$7.4)
Vermont	611	1	85,000	82,086	-3.4%	\$3.2	\$4.2	\$9.3	(\$1.9)
Carolinian	704	1	231,000	306,419	32.6%	\$2.0	\$18.8	\$21.9	(\$1.1)
Capitol Ltd.	780	1	179,000	226,884	26.8%	N/A	\$22.4	\$47.0	(\$24.5)
Palmetto	829	1	188,000	198,260	5.5%	N/A	\$17.4	\$34.0	(\$16.5)
Auto Train	855	1	241,000	264,096	9.6%	N/A	\$69.9	\$101.5	(\$31.5)
City of New Orleans	934	1	174,000	253,170	45.5%	N/A	\$18.8	\$41.6	(\$22.8)
Lake Shore Ltd.	989	1	355,000	403,700	13.7%	N/A	\$32.9	\$70.4	(\$37.5)
Cardinal	1,147	1	80,000	116,373	45.5%	N/A	\$7.8	\$26.4	(\$18.6)
Texas Eagle	1,305	1	95,000	337,973	255.8%	N/A	\$26.6	\$56.7	(\$30.1)
Coast Starlight	1,377	1	497,000	454,443	-8.6%	N/A	\$44.3	\$98.1	(\$53.8)
Crescent	1,377	1	247,000	304,266	23.2%	N/A	\$32.3	\$77.1	(\$44.8)
Silver Meteor	1,389	1	255,000	375,164	47.1%	N/A	\$41.6	\$85.6	(\$44.0)
Silver Star	1,521	1	270,000	425,794	57.7%	N/A	\$36.3	\$86.9	(\$50.7)
Sunset Ltd.	1,995	1	124,000	101,217	-18.4%	N/A	\$12.6	\$51.7	(\$39.1)
Empire Builder	2,230	1	347,000	543,072	56.5%	N/A	\$57.7	\$112.3	(\$54.6)
Southwest Chief	2,265	1	257,000	355,316	38.3%	N/A	\$48.0	\$114.5	(\$66.5)
California Zephyr	2,438	1	292,000	376,459	28.9%	N/A	\$49.8	\$112.5	(\$62.6)

* Change unavailable for some routes due to missing or nonexistent FY 1997 data

** Does not include capital charges (such as depreciation), interest, and other costs

Source: Brookings analysis of Amtrak data

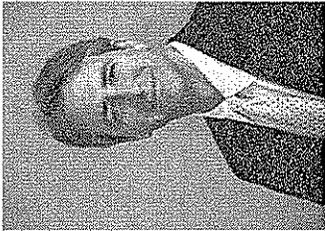
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- Robert Puentes is a senior fellow with the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program where he also directs the Program's Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative. The Initiative was established to address the pressing infrastructure challenges facing cities and suburbs in the U.S. and abroad.
- Robert's work focuses on the broad array of policies and issues related to metropolitan growth and development including transportation and infrastructure, urban planning, growth management, suburban issues, and smart cities.
- Prior to joining Brookings, Robert was the director of infrastructure programs at the Intelligent Transportation Society of America. He holds a master's degree from the University of Virginia where he served on the Alumni Advisory Board, and is an affiliated professor with Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute.
- He serves on a variety of boards and committees including, most recently, New York State's 2100 Infrastructure Commission, the District of Columbia's Streetcar Financing and Governance Task Force, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's Technical Advisory Committee, the Tysons Corner Tomorrow Advisory Task Force, and the Falls Church, Virginia Planning Commission where he lives with his wife and three sons.
- Recent publications include: *Have Americans Hit Peak Travel? A Discussion of the Changes in US Driving Habits; Global Gateways: International Aviation in Metropolitan America; Banking on Infrastructure: Enhancing State Revolving Funds for Transportation; The Intersection of Place and the Next Economy; A Path to Public Private Partnerships for Infrastructure; Moving Past Gridlock: A Proposal for a Two-Year Transportation Law; Investing for Success: Examining a Federal Capital Budget and a National Infrastructure Bank; A Bridge to Somewhere: Rethinking American Transportation for the 21st Century; A Review of the Land Use Regulations in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Areas; Prosperity at Risk: Toward a Competitive New Jersey; and One Fifth of the Nation: A Profile of Change in America's First Suburbs.*
- He is a frequent speaker to a variety of groups, a regular contributor in newspapers and other media, and has testified before Congressional committees.

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(1) Name:
Robert Puentes

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing:
The views I will express in my testimony are mine alone and do not necessarily represent those of the staff, officers, or trustees of The Brookings Institution.

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

None

Signature



Date

5/7/13