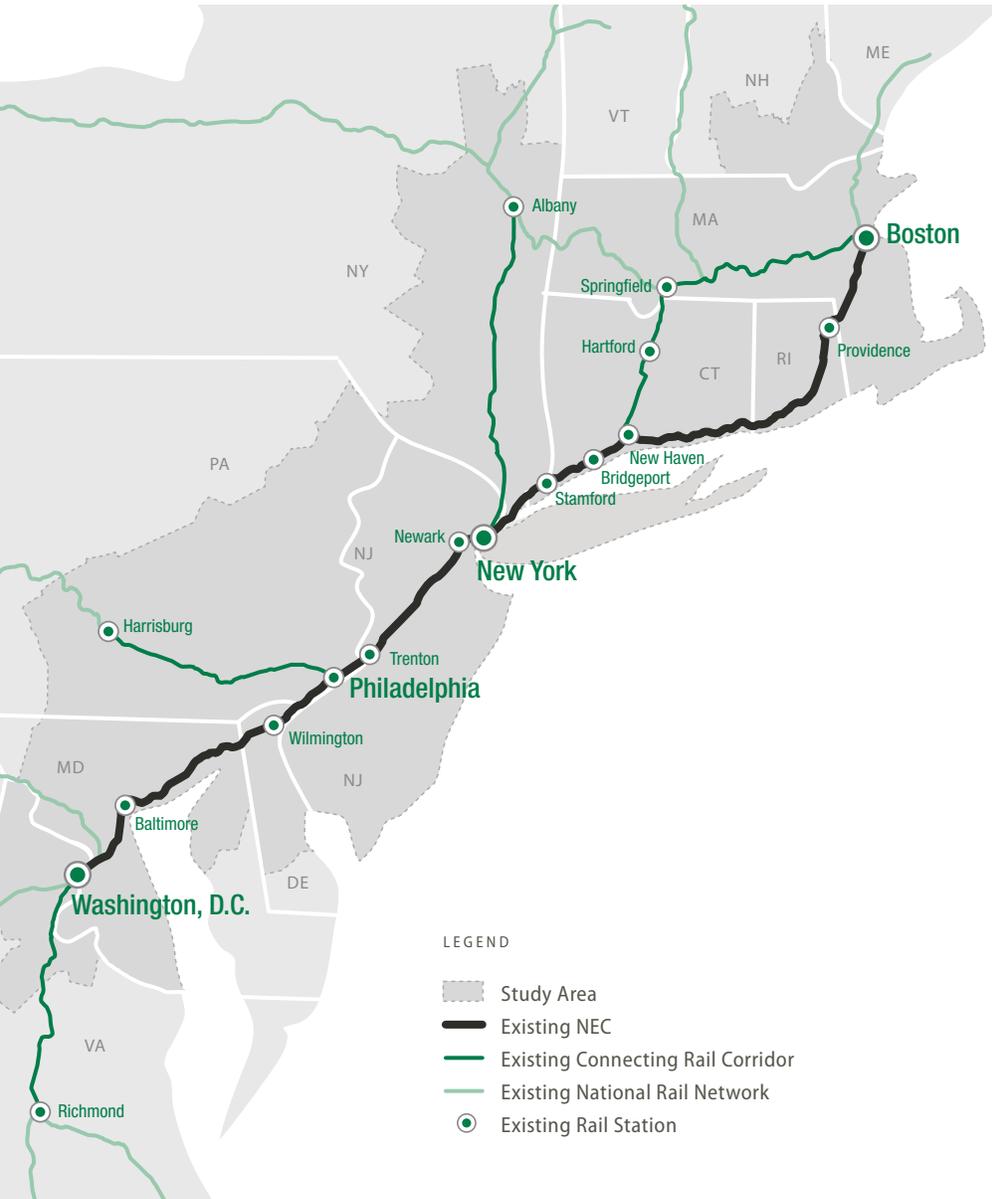


# Our Future on Track



**NEC FUTURE** is a comprehensive planning effort to define, evaluate, and prioritize future investments in the Northeast Corridor (NEC), the rail spine from Washington, D.C. to Boston. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is developing both a long-term vision and near-term actions to improve passenger service.

The NEC faces serious challenges posed by aging infrastructure and inadequate capacity to fully meet current travel demand or to expand as the region's population grows. With similar capacity constraints affecting the region's highways and congested airports, NEC FUTURE is intended to help address these critical mobility issues through rail improvements. We hope you will take a moment to look over this brochure or visit our website at [www.necfuture.com](http://www.necfuture.com).

The NEC is the busiest rail corridor in the nation, and is vital to the economy and cities of the Northeast region.

**457**  
MILES

**750,000**  
PASSENGERS DAILY

**2,220**  
PASSENGER TRAINS DAILY

**70**  
FREIGHT TRAINS DAILY



# Purpose and Need

The purpose of the NEC FUTURE program is to upgrade aging infrastructure and to improve the reliability, capacity, connectivity, performance, and resiliency of passenger rail service on the NEC for both intercity and regional trips, while promoting environmental sustainability and economic growth.

## STUDY PARTNERS

The FRA is the lead agency for NEC FUTURE, working closely with a number of key partners including:

- Federal Transit Administration
- NEC Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission
- Railroad operators, including Amtrak, VRE, MARC, SEPTA, NJ Transit, LIRR, Metro North, Shore Line East, MBTA, and freight operators
- State, federal, and local agencies

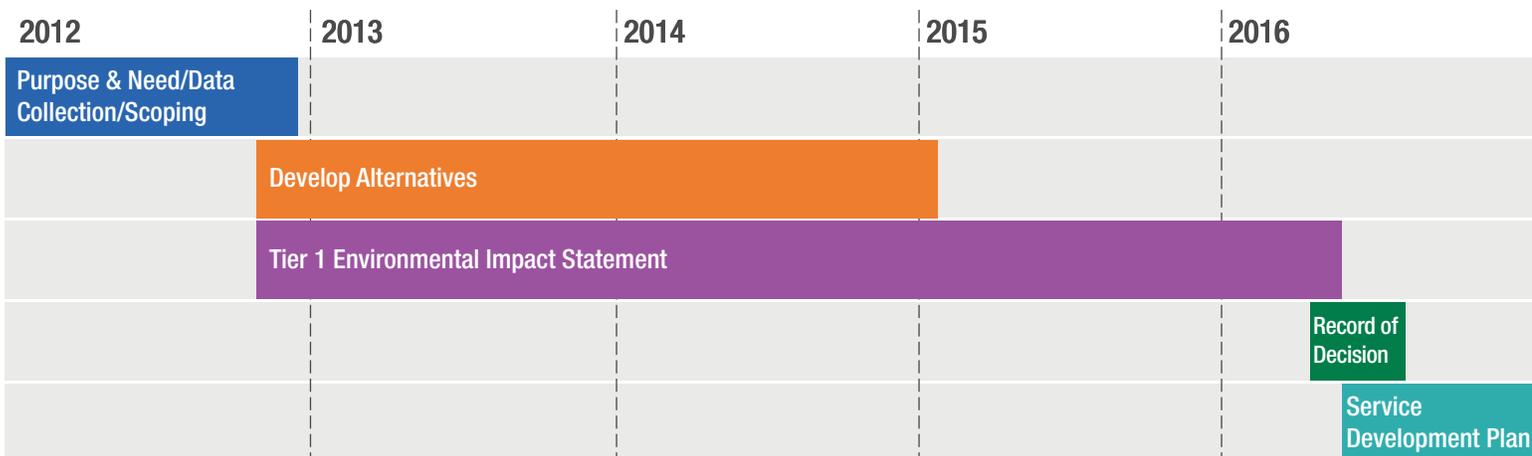
## STUDY PROCESS

NEC FUTURE includes two components:

- A Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 EIS) that will evaluate the environmental effects of proposed improvements at a broad level, and
- A Service Development Plan (SDP) that defines proposed rail service improvements and evaluates their benefits and costs.

Together, these studies will guide investments in the corridor through 2040.

# Program Schedule



### State of Good Repair

Service quality currently falls short, due to the aging and obsolete infrastructure that has resulted from insufficient investment in maintaining a state of good repair on the existing NEC. Achieving and maintaining a state of good repair is needed to improve service.



### Connectivity

There is a need to improve the reach and effectiveness of the passenger rail network currently limited by gaps in connectivity among transportation modes and between different rail services.



### Capacity

In order to accommodate both existing riders and future growth in ridership, improvements at critical infrastructure chokepoints are needed to fix severe capacity constraints that limit service expansion and enhancements.



### Performance

In many markets, the trip times on passenger rail within the study area are not competitive with travel by air or highway. Improvements in travel times, frequency, or hours of service are needed to make passenger rail competitive with other modes.



### System-Wide Resiliency

The NEC is vulnerable to the effect of severe storms. A more resilient and redundant passenger rail network is needed to enhance safety, security, and the reliability of the region's transportation system.



### Environmental Sustainability

Throughout the Study Area, energy use and emissions associated with transportation affect the built and natural environment. Passenger rail can help meet the region's mobility needs with fewer environmental impacts.



### Economic Growth

A transportation system that provides options for reliable, efficient, and cost effective movement of passengers and goods is needed for continued economic growth in the Northeast region. The region's knowledge-based economic sector, including academic research and medical facilities, is especially reliant on access to convenient, reliable, and frequent rail service.

# Choices for the NEC

The FRA has considered a broad range of alternatives for the NEC, beginning with a public scoping process in 2012. The FRA consolidated nearly 100 initial concepts into 15 Preliminary Alternatives that varied by level of investment, service, and route options. These Preliminary Alternatives were evaluated to develop a smaller set of alternatives for detailed study in the Tier 1 EIS.

The Tier 1 EIS Alternatives provide distinct choices for the NEC, ranging from a No Action Alternative that would keep the NEC operating (but would not keep pace with population growth), to three Action Alternatives, including an alternative that would transform the way rail transportation serves the Northeast -- with new tracks for high-speed service between Washington, D.C. and Boston.

- **No Action:** Includes planned and programmed projects to keep the NEC operating
- **Alternative 1:** Maintains the role of rail with service sufficient to meet underlying growth in demand for regional and intercity rail in 2040
- **Alternative 2:** Grows the role of rail with service to new intercity markets
- **Alternative 3:** Transforms the role of rail by becoming a dominant choice for intercity and regional trips along the NEC

## How will the NEC keep pace with growth in the Northeast? What role will it play in the region's future?

Each Tier 1 EIS Alternative defines the cities to be served by passenger rail, a "representative route" connecting them, the level of service to be provided, and the infrastructure investments needed to support that service. All Action Alternatives would continue to provide service on the existing NEC line, as well as needed repairs.

While the Action Alternatives are distinct in their service and physical characteristics, there are several elements that are common to all three. All are intended to:

- Maintain and improve service on the existing NEC
- Achieve a state of good repair, through initial projects that meet the most immediate needs of the NEC
- Increase capacity and improve service by addressing chokepoints that constrain operations
- Protect freight rail access and the opportunity for future expansion
- Expand the range of service offerings to fill gaps in existing service



### HOW COULD THESE DECISIONS AFFECT COMMUNITIES?

The decisions made as a result of NEC FUTURE could have far-reaching effects on transportation in the Northeast, potentially changing the mix of rail services offered, reducing travel times, increasing service frequency, and adding new stations. These changes could in turn affect local economic conditions, such as jobs and development opportunities. The construction and operation of the new infrastructure would create jobs, but could result in impacts to properties and effects on the natural environment.

NEC FUTURE is only the first step in defining a program of future improvements to the NEC. The environmental effects of the Tier 1 EIS Alternatives have been analyzed at a high level, providing a general comparison of the effects on built areas, the economy, and the natural environment. More detailed environmental reviews at the project level will be needed to identify specific community impacts and benefits. These more detailed "Tier 2" reviews will include opportunities for public and agency involvement prior to the start of any construction. Both NEC FUTURE and subsequent Tier 2 projects will also consider methods for mitigating, or lessening, the community impacts that may be identified.

# We invite you to be a part of NEC FUTURE!

NEC FUTURE is an opportunity for a broad public dialogue to establish a future vision for the corridor. The planning process is structured to help foster a broad discussion on future directions for corridor investment, by bringing together numerous stakeholders from the corridor's eight states and the District of Columbia.



Visit our website at:  
[www.necfuture.com](http://www.necfuture.com)



Submit a comment online:  
[www.necfuture.com/get\\_involved/](http://www.necfuture.com/get_involved/)



Sign up for email updates at:  
[info@necfuture.com](mailto:info@necfuture.com)



Or write to:  
**NEC FUTURE**  
USDOT, Federal Railroad Administration  
One Bowling Green, Suite 429  
New York, NY 10004

## COORDINATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

The FRA is committed to an open and transparent public involvement process. A variety of outreach opportunities are provided to facilitate meaningful dialogue, including:

- Public meetings
- Regional workshops
- Webinars
- Briefings for agencies, public officials, and organizations

For information on how you or your organization can participate, visit [www.necfuture.com](http://www.necfuture.com).

### Public Meetings

Public input—including nearly 2,500 comments received during the scoping process in 2012—helped shape the development of NEC FUTURE alternatives. In 2014, the FRA held open house meetings throughout the corridor to provide an update on the alternatives.



### Pop-up Train Station Tour

The NEC FUTURE team spoke with riders at 16 NEC stations in 2013. This initiative reached over 12,000 riders.



### Regional Dialogues

Regional Dialogues in December 2012 and April 2013 engaged participants in the alternatives development process.



### Agency Coordination

FRA has engaged numerous agencies within the Study Area throughout the planning process. This includes early engagement with environmental resource and regulatory agencies in the environmental review process.

