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Approximately 800 individuals submitted comments, many addressing multiple topics. In all, nearly 2,500 distinct comments were received on a wide range of topics, including study area boundaries, investment priorities, alternatives, stations, connecting service, freight service, and public involvement in the study process. The project team followed a systematic process to analyze each comment and identify themes. A Scoping Summary was prepared to document these comments and the scoping process. The Scoping Summary and scoping meeting presentations and display boards are available on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com).

Information learned in the scoping process will help shape and inform the development of alternatives and the environmental review process.

A Public Dialogue Begins: Scoping Highlights

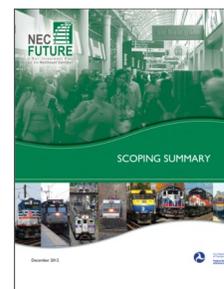
One of the highlights of 2012 for the NEC FUTURE program was a scoping process that enabled agencies, stakeholders and the public along the corridor to learn about and contribute to shaping NEC FUTURE. In addition to opening a dialogue with the public, the scoping process provided an opportunity to hear directly from many stakeholders and contributed many important ideas for consideration as the program moves forward.

During the NEC FUTURE scoping period, which began on June 22nd and concluded on October 19th, a series of nine public and agency scoping meetings were held in each state along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and the District of Columbia. More than 500 members of the public and 120 representatives of federal, state, local and regional agencies attended these meetings to learn about the project and provide comments. Comments were also submitted on the NEC FUTURE website and by mail. A webinar on September 24th provided another opportunity for agencies to participate in the scoping process.



NEC FUTURE Scoping Meetings

Scoping Themes



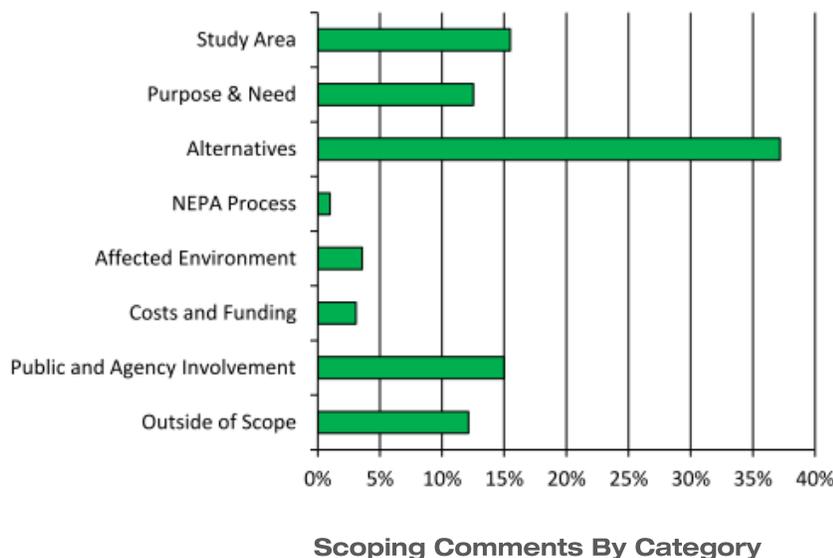
As the study team reviewed and analyzed the nearly 2,500 distinct comments on a wide range of topics submitted by the public during the scoping period, several distinct

themes emerged. These themes are described in the Scoping Summary, which is available on the project website (www.necfuture.com).

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Scoping Themes (continued from page 1)...



Themes included:

- Supporting an incremental approach to investment in the existing NEC;
- Improving connectivity between regional and local service through improved scheduling, increased capacity and through-ticketing, as well as improving intermodal connections;
- Balancing service to existing NEC communities with service to new markets;
- Focusing on an open and inclusive process throughout the NEC FUTURE project, and
- Coordinating with related projects and plans.

These themes will provide direction as NEC FUTURE advances.

December Dialogues – Continuing the Discussion

In early December, the FRA hosted December Dialogues, a series of informal workshops to continue the discussion with stakeholders that began during the scoping process. Workshops were held in each of the three project regions:

- North: Boston, December 3rd
- Central: New York, December 5th
- South: Philadelphia, December 4th

Two webinars on December 6th provided an additional opportunity to participate for those who were unable to attend one of the meetings.

The December Dialogues were designed to inform the study process and the development of alternatives. The workshops provided an overview of NEC FUTURE, a summary of

comments received during scoping, a description of the project’s market-based approach and the framework for alternatives development. They included small group exercises to help refine the goals for NEC FUTURE and discuss service characteristics to be considered in developing and evaluating the alternatives. The sessions provided valuable input for the FRA.

The December Dialogues presentation is available on the NEC FUTURE website (www.necfuture.com).

The FRA will continue to provide opportunities for a broad public dialogue as the NEC FUTURE program advances. The public will be invited to participate in future public forums that will take place in communities along the NEC.



December Dialogues

Next Steps—Developing Alternatives for NEC FUTURE

In 2013, a key task for NEC FUTURE is the development of alternatives for detailed study in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These alternatives will be studied and evaluated in a multi-step process. Ultimately, this will lead to the selection of an investment program, setting forth a vision for future improvement and expansion of the NEC.

Developing the list of Initial Alternatives was the first step in the alternatives development process. The Initial Alternatives represent a broad range of options, many of which reflect comments received during the scoping process. The framework for developing and organizing the Initial Alternatives consisted of three major building blocks:

- **Program Investment Level** – Four different levels (low to high) define the extent of investment in the existing NEC and the ability to add capacity and service beyond the existing NEC spine.
- **Route/Network** – Specific route options were identified for serving markets both on and off the NEC spine.
- **Service Definition** – Defines different types of service that can be provided to markets, including today's conventional mix of commuter, intercity and high-speed trains and opportunities for new enhanced services providing alternate ways of serving the markets.

Using combinations of these building blocks, approximately 100 different alternatives were developed that covered the spectrum of opportunities to upgrade and expand the NEC, serve existing and new markets, provide better connectivity to other markets and develop new high-speed rail service.

As the alternatives development process advanced, these Initial Alternatives were organized and consolidated into a smaller set of Preliminary Alternatives that continue to include a broad array of service and investment options for the NEC. A Preliminary Alternatives Report will be prepared documenting the evaluation process and alternatives, and will be posted on the website when available in Spring 2013. These alternatives will be further analyzed and evaluated to produce Reasonable Alternatives for more detailed study in the Tier 1 EIS, leading to an investment program in the Record of Decision.

Approximately 100 different Initial Alternatives were developed that represent a broad range of options for future improvement and expansion of the NEC. Many of these reflect comments received during the scoping process.

Q: How does NEC FUTURE relate to Amtrak's Vision for High-Speed Rail?

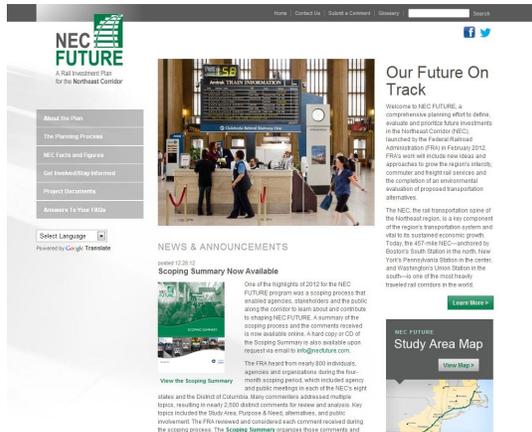
A: NEC FUTURE, which is being led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), is studying improvements to the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to serve all types of rail users, including commuter/regional rail and intercity service, while also accommodating expected growth in freight operations. A primary focus of NEC FUTURE is to identify the markets that can best be served by passenger rail as the Northeast region continues to grow. This analysis may indicate that a new high-speed route would best serve the intercity rail market in the Northeast. If that is the case, the NEC FUTURE program will identify the options for serving these markets.

Amtrak's proposal, [*A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor*](#), is one possibility for serving the high-speed market in the Northeast. Other alternatives have been identified and will also be considered. The final result of NEC FUTURE will be a selected investment program that addresses all of the NEC rail markets and enhances the regional transportation system.

Stay Informed

Read the Scoping Summary, view the December Dialogues presentation, and register to receive project email updates on the project website (www.necfuture.com).

Watch for the Preliminary Alternatives Report, to be available on the website this spring.



More information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

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Or you may write to:

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Looking Ahead

Initial activities for NEC FUTURE, which began in February 2012, included stakeholder outreach, agency coordination, data collection and validation, resource and regulatory agency coordination, initiation of the Tier 1 EIS and scoping process, and development of initial alternatives.

In 2013, upcoming tasks include preparation of a Preliminary Alternatives Report, and continued stakeholder outreach and agency coordination. Efforts will focus on the Draft Tier 1 EIS and the Draft Service Development Plan, which are scheduled for completion in the spring of 2014.

Upcoming Activities

ACTIVITY	DATE
Stakeholder Outreach and Agency Coordination	Ongoing
Preliminary Alternatives Report	Spring 2013
Alternatives Development	Throughout 2013
Tier 1 EIS Study Area Existing Conditions	February—July 2013
Ridership and Operations Analysis	February 2013—January 2014

