

# 2015 FRA Rail Program Delivery



## *Service Development* *Planning for Intercity* *Passenger Rail*

**Peter Schwartz**

**Federal Railroad Administration**

## What is a Service Development Plan?

1. A business plan for the proposed service?
2. An operating plan?
3. A capital plan?
4. An investment case?

**ALL OF THESE, WITH 3 OBJECTIVES**

Demonstrate:

1. Operational Feasibility
2. Financial Feasibility
3. Value and Merit of the Proposed Service

F E D E R A L R A I L R O A D A D M I N I S T R A T I O N

## **Service Development Plan Structure**

- 1. Rationale, Goals, and Objectives**
- 2. Identification of Alternatives**
- 3. Planning Methodology**
- 4. Demand and Revenue Forecasts**
- 5. Operations Analysis**
- 6. Station and Access Analysis**
- 7. Conceptual Engineering and Capital Programming**
- 8. Operating and Maintenance Costs and Capital Replacement Forecast**
- 9. Public Benefits Analysis**

## **SDP structure may be linear, but the planning process is inherently iterative**

- **Structure reflects the planning logic and sequence of the “first pass” through the planning process**

### **BUT**

- **Prior steps must be revisited as subsequent steps refine or revise assumption made in prior steps.**
- **Examples:**
  1. **Operations Analysis results in changes to assumed timetables and trip times that must be reflected in revised demand forecasts**
  2. **Capital and O&M cost estimates raise questions of financial feasibility, requiring changes to assumed service characteristics.**

## Timeline for Service Development Planning

- **Preliminary service planning occurs as part of Regional Planning or “feasibility planning,” but at a high level**
- **SDP preparation begins when project sponsor decides to seriously commit to pursuing new/improved service and prepare a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (SDP + Service NEPA)**
  - **Adopt planning methodologies and tools that will guide project through to service initiation**
  - **Significant detail required early-on - the conclusions of the SDP are generally sensitive to minor changes**
  - **Plan with enough detail support a decision to implement the project**
- **First complete version of SDP will be complete prior to beginning PE**

## Timeline for Service Development Planning

- **SDP is updated during PE/Project NEPA, FD, and Construction to reflect external and internal changes that will affect the service**

| External Changes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Internal Changes                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic/transportation conditions affecting demand forecasts</li> <li>• Economic conditions affecting cost estimates</li> <li>• Rail traffic changes affecting necessary infrastructure improvements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed design/engineering and NEPA affecting capital programing, cost estimates, or service characteristics</li> </ul> |

## Relationship between the SDP and NEPA Document

- **Along with Service NEPA, one of two components of a “Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan”**
  - Prerequisite implementation funding
- **NEPA document and SDP must be consistent, and share much of the same content**
  - NEPA Purpose and Need ⇔ SDP “Rationale, Goals, and Objectives”
  - NEPA Alternatives Considered ⇔ SDP “Identification of Alternatives”
  - NEPA Alternatives Analysis ⇔ SDP Service Planning



## NEPA Alternatives Analysis vs. the Service Development Plan

- Differing objectives, shared content

| NEPA Alternatives Analysis                                                                                                                       | Service Development Plan                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Includes Service Planning as part of identifying Reasonable Alternatives, delineating between alternatives, and assessing environmental impacts. | Refines Service Planning to the point necessary to demonstrate operational and financial feasibility and project value and merit. |

- **The reasonable alternatives considered in NEPA do not need to be supported by a level of service planning required for an SDP – only enough to fulfill the objectives of NEPA Alternatives Analysis.**
- **Only the Preferred Alternative identified through the NEPA process must be supported SDP-level service planning.**

F E D E R A L R A I L R O A D A D M I N I S T R A T I O N