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Northeast Corridor Commission Announces CONNECT NEC 2035

Washington, DC (July 14, 2021)—The Northeast Corridor Commission released CONNECT NEC 2035 (C35) today—a 15-year plan representing the most ambitious reinvestment program in the NEC’s history and a new way of planning: a multi-agency, multi-year, shared action plan guided by a long-term vision. The state governments of the Northeast, the federal government, eight commuter rail agencies, and Amtrak worked together through the NEC Commission to develop a detailed and efficient sequencing of infrastructure investments covering 150 projects and capital renewal efforts along the corridor.

The implementation of C35 will result in a modern and resilient railroad with safe, reliable, and more frequent service; connections to new markets; and reduced travel times between communities.

“Improving the NEC rail system is a vital multi-state effort” said **Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration and NEC Commission co-chair**. “C35 is a sequenced plan and a mobilizing force that not only puts people back at work renewing the NEC, but also supports new travel patterns as our economy returns to full strength.”

“The corridor supports more than 800,000 daily passenger trips between the greater Washington D.C. and Boston regions,” said **Kevin Corbett, President & CEO of NJ TRANSIT and NEC Commission co-chair**. “It is imperative that together we seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to replace aging assets, add rail capacity, improve performance, and enhance the customer experience along the entire corridor through the advancement of the vital and ambitious C35 plan.”

C35 is the first phase of the long-term vision for the corridor established in the Federal Railroad Administration’s 2017 NEC FUTURE plan, making significant improvements to NEC rail service for both existing and new riders, on both commuter rail systems and Amtrak. The \$117 billion C35 plan would result in a renewed NEC with the following benefits for a thriving Northeast region:

- Improve mobility and connections
 - Travel time savings valued at nearly \$140 million annually for intercity and commuter rail passengers corridor-wide
 - 26-minute faster trips for Acela riders traveling from DC to NYC & 28-minute faster trips from NYC to Boston
 - 25-minute faster trips for express commuters traveling from New Haven to NYC
 - Daily Amtrak NEC service increases of 33% and doubled service for several commuter railroads

- New one-seat ride services in NJ, NY, and CT into Penn Station New York
- Create economic opportunity
 - Nearly 1.7 million new jobs and \$90 billion in earnings over 15-years throughout the U.S.
 - New and enhanced connections between affordable housing and high-wage job centers
 - New off-peak and reverse-peak services for underserved markets
- Combat climate change
 - Long-term viability of services that already reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 2.9 million car trips annually between New York and Los Angeles
 - 60 million new rail trips annually using a lower carbon emitting mode than air/bus/auto
 - Investments in hardened infrastructure to build a more resilient railroad
- Support desirable cities and communities
 - Supports innovation districts and is a catalyst for ongoing development initiatives in places such as Newark, DE, Philadelphia, PA, Providence, RI, and Boston, MA
 - Provides reliable, frequent access to support and sustain transit-oriented development

“C35 represents a big step towards the high-quality rail network our nation and this vital region deserve. The investments in infrastructure laid out in this plan will lead to more modern, reliable, and faster trains, expanded service, and a better customer experience - that will benefit customers, economies and local communities along the entire Northeast Corridor and beyond,” said **Stephen Gardner, President of Amtrak**. “Amtrak stands ready to join forces with our partners and help deliver the C35 plan.”

The Northeast Corridor Commission supports a strong federal-state funding partnership to fund C35. The total investment needed to implement C35 over the 15-year period is estimated to be \$117 billion in 2020 dollars and the funding gap is approximately \$100 billion, to be shared between the federal government and states. To maximize the detailed sequencing laid out in C35 and provide the certainty needed to make long-term investments in workforce development and equipment procurement, multi-year funding needs to be predictable and should fund the plan, rather than individual projects.

The complete CONNECT NEC 2035 plan and territory fact sheets are available online at www.nec-commission.com/connect-nec-2035/.

Additional quotes from Northeast Corridor Commission members:

Nuria Fernandez, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration: *“The cooperation through the Northeast Corridor Commission creating C35 will result in safer, faster, and more reliable travel for commuters throughout the Northeast region. It will also connect transit riders, all along the corridor, with the intercity trains which so many communities and businesses rely on to get individuals to work and essential services. C35 will do so while taking cars off the road, helping to lessen the impacts of climate change. I look forward to its full implementation.”*

Jamey Tesler, Acting Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation: *“The C35 plan is the culmination of 2 years of hard work and detailed analysis. It also represents the start of a new level of coordination among Amtrak, NEC state and commuter railroads, and the federal government. Delivering sustained investment in the NEC and connecting corridors will improve mobility for millions of Americans, create jobs, open access to opportunity, support our fight against climate change, and continue to make the Northeast a global economic powerhouse.”*

Peter Alviti, Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation: *“The C35 plan is collaborative, compelling, and timely and is important to the future economic growth of Rhode Island by providing faster, more frequent, and less expensive transportation alternatives between Providence and Boston and beyond. It supports the work that RIDOT is already doing to enhance our transit system in bringing Providence Station into good repair, building a new commuter rail station, and planning for an expansion of rail service at Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport. Rhode Island is ready to work hard to make C35 a reality. It is the way of the future.”*

Joseph Giulietti, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation: *“C35 rail investments are the building blocks for our country’s future and transforming the Northeast. As a blueprint for making tangible and significant social, equitable, and economic impact in countless communities, we have an opportunity to reshape how people move—where and why—for this generation and the next. Connectivity will be key to ensuring economic opportunities are created for all people.”*

Janno Lieber, President of MTA Construction & Development: *“This plan lays out how projects can be sequenced and coordinated to get the most work out of track outages, minimize customer impacts, and save money. To achieve these efficiencies, we need funding for all aspects of C35 – commuter and intercity rail projects.”*

Jennie Granger, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation: *“The C35 plan sequences over 150 projects and capital renewal activities over the course of 15 years. The plan’s sequencing of activities to bring the Corridor into a state of good repair is paramount, particularly along the Harrisburg Line where our signal and overhead power systems date back to the 1930s. The plan will ensure that passengers have access to safe, reliable, and comfortable service in Pennsylvania.”*

Nicole Majeski, Secretary, Delaware Department of Transportation: *“Delaware is excited by the opportunities the C35 plan provides for improving passenger rail service in Delaware and along the entire Northeast Corridor. It is a plan that will meet existing and future ridership mobility needs, and improve on-time performance and the environment.”*

Greg Slater, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation: *“The Northeast Corridor is the nation’s oldest and busiest passenger railroad. C35’s groundbreaking analytical approach will unlock achievable, measurable, and significant service benefits by 2035. Maryland is home to four major backlog assets on the corridor. The critical replacement of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel with a new Frederick Douglass Tunnel, in particular, will improve MARC and Amtrak service and benefit from C35’s project delivery sequencing and efficient use of track outages.”*

Everett Lott, Acting Director, District Department of Transportation: *“The C35 plan is an important step to ensure that the NEC continues to be a cornerstone of the Northeast’s development and driver of its economic success. The plan will not only create 198,000 jobs over 15 years in the Mid-Atlantic South territory, but also includes the modernization of Washington Union Station to improve the passenger experience and expand capacity through additional tracks and platforms.”*

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About the Northeast Corridor Commission

The Northeast Corridor Commission was established by Congress in 2008 (49 U.S.C. §24905) to develop coordinated strategies to improve the Northeast’s core rail network in recognition of the inherent challenges of planning, financing, and implementing major infrastructure improvements that cross multiple jurisdictions. The expectation is that by coming together to take collective responsibility for the NEC, Commission member agencies will achieve a level of success that far exceeds the potential reach of any individual organization.

The Commission is governed by a board comprised of one member from each of the NEC states (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland) and the District of Columbia; four members from Amtrak; and five members from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Commission also includes non-voting representatives from freight railroads, states with connecting corridors, and commuter operators.