



NORTHEAST CORRIDOR COMMISSION
10 G Street NE, Suite 360
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 847-0280
www.nec-commission.com

CONNECT NEC 2035: Frequently Asked Questions

About the C35 Plan

What is CONNECT NEC 2035 (C35)?

C35 represents 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 vision was developed by FRA as NEC FUTURE based on a 5-year planning effort involving robust stakeholder and public outreach. NEC FUTURE outlined the rail investments necessary to modernize and repair the existing railroad as well as increase the capacity of the NEC to respond to the growing population of intercity and commuter passengers.

The state governments of the Northeast, the federal government, eight commuter rail agencies, and Amtrak have come together through the Northeast Corridor Commission as never before to develop the C35 plan to implement the NEC FUTURE vision by outlining a detailed and efficient sequencing of infrastructure investments that can be constructed on an active and busy railroad over 15 years.

With adequate funding and a robust workforce, this program will achieve significant progress on improving service and eliminating the state-of-good-repair backlog, while keeping this critical system running safely and reliably, and supporting our economy.

Who was involved in developing C35?

C35 was developed by the Northeast Corridor Commission through a collaborative process involving all of its members, including all four infrastructure owners, eight commuter rail agencies, Amtrak, and federal and state governments.

How many jobs will this plan produce?

C35 investment will generate **1.7 million jobs** over the 15-year plan. This includes:

Nearly 1 million new jobs in the Northeast. These new public and private sector direct (construction), indirect (suppliers and manufacturers), and induced (new jobs supported by wages from direct and indirect jobs) jobs will in turn generate \$60 billion in earnings.

Northeast Corridor Commission

An additional 700,000 jobs and \$34 billion in earnings are estimated to be generated in the U.S. beyond the Northeast in industries providing materials and equipment for the C35 plan.

How will this plan help to address climate change?

The Northeast's robust transit network provides a carbon-efficient transportation option for the region's travelers. If all the NEC's pre-pandemic travelers were diverted from rail to highway and air, it would add 3.9 million metric tons of GHG emissions per year, the equivalent of 2.9 million cars driving from New York, NY to Los Angeles, CA.

Without C35, nearly 60 million annual additional commuter and intercity trips would need to be accommodated on less efficient modes such as auto, bus, or air, causing increased congestion and carbon emissions.

The C35 plan invests in hardened infrastructure to build a more resilient railroad.

How much will C35 cost?

C35 will require a strong federal-state funding partnership. The total investment needed to implement C35 over the 15-year period is estimated to be \$117 billion and the funding gap is approximately \$100 billion, to be shared between the federal government and states.

There are two key principles for a new or restructured funding program to implement C35: (1) make funding predictable; and (2) fund the plan rather than individual projects.

There has been great uncertainty over the past year about changed work habits and how people will travel. Why is C35 still needed?

Although the pandemic dramatically reduced all travel throughout the U.S. and the world, the Commission expects rail travel to rebound just as it did following the ridership drops associated with other major events that disrupted the transportation industry like 9/11 and the 2008 recession.

Rail will continue to be a primary mode of travel for many people, including those without access to a car, and we must provide high-quality service and equitable accessibility for these customers.

C35 can be a mobilizing force in putting people back to work by building a rail system that can reabsorb travel demand and support new travel patterns that may grow as our economy returns to full strength.

C35 Plan: Infrastructure

Does C35 address all of the corridor's state-of-good-repair needs?

All 15 necessary major bridge and tunnel replacement or rehabilitation projects on the NEC will be completed by 2035. This includes B&P Tunnel in Baltimore, MD, the tunnel under the Hudson River in NY, and CT River Bridge in CT, among many others.

Most, but not all, basic infrastructure assets (track, signals, electric traction systems, undergrade bridges, etc.) can be brought into a state of good repair by 2035.

Does C35 include Gateway?

Yes, the plan includes completion of all Gateway projects by 2035.

Does C35 include a plan for new railroad right-of-way between New Haven and Providence?

C35 does include investments to address the repair needs of the NEC itself, which is threatened by rising sea levels and the effects of climate change.

However, C35 does not include any projects outside of the existing NEC right-of-way between New Haven and Providence.

Due to physical and geographic constraints, and lack of consensus in that portion of the NEC, the NEC FUTURE vision did not identify investments to grow the NEC between New Haven and Providence, but rather called for a study of future capacity needs between New Haven and Providence.

C35 includes that study which will involve planning and design for new higher-speed segments to improve service for this region along the NEC.

Any initiatives that emerge from such a study can be integrated into future updates of the CONNECT NEC plan.

C35 Plan: Service

Does C35 provide for growth in commuter and intercity services?

C35 will make significant improvements to NEC rail service for both existing and new riders, on both commuter rail systems and Amtrak.

Daily NEC trains will grow by a third for Amtrak and double for several commuter railroads.

New stations will introduce service to underserved communities and expanded one-seat services will create new direct connections.

Northeast Corridor Commission

How much will C35 reduce travel times on the corridor?

C35 investments will support 26-minute faster trips for Acela riders traveling from DC to NYC and 28-minute faster trips from NYC to Boston, all within the existing NEC footprint.

In Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut/New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, infrastructure modifications and new express service patterns will also speed up select commuter rail trips.

Relationship to other plans or efforts

What is its relation to NEC FUTURE?

C35 is the first phase of implementing the long-term vision for the corridor established in the Federal Railroad Administration's 2017 NEC FUTURE plan.

NEC FUTURE service and performance objectives were considered throughout the project delivery analysis.

The integrated project delivery approach was used to identify ways to make progress towards adding capacity, relieving chokepoints, and improving operating flexibility to incrementally work towards NEC FUTURE travel time and frequency targets.

One key component of NEC FUTURE was the call for a study of future capacity needs between New Haven and Providence. C35 includes that study. Any initiatives that emerge from such a study can be integrated into future updates of the CONNECT NEC plan once they complete necessary feasibility analysis, environmental reviews, and public engagement.

What sets C35 apart from all of the other plans out there?

C35 is implementing a long-term vision that considered, at a high level, demand, transportation needs of the NEC region, and environmental impacts.

C35 itself is a consensus-based plan with extensive input from all operators on the NEC and has the support of the Northeast states, Amtrak, USDOT, and commuter rail agencies.

C35 is the first multi-year plan for the NEC with a detailed, credible delivery blueprint. That means a specific sequencing of construction that, with adequate funding and an expanded pool of skilled labor, can be built over 15 years with limited service disruptions for customers.

C35 considered each individual project in the context of the overall NEC infrastructure to ensure the sum of the plan is greater than its parts: advancing projects that collectively unlock measurable and significant service benefits for the whole region by 2035 while modernizing existing infrastructure for over 800,000 trips per day (pre-pandemic).

Northeast Corridor Commission

Is C35 bringing high-speed rail?

C35 will fix and improve the existing NEC as a foundation for future high-speed service and put in motion the development of new high-speed segments capable of delivering world-class service to the region.

C35 will make early progress towards meeting long-term performance objectives by reducing Boston to Washington travel time by nearly an hour.

C35 will upgrade existing track to make over 300% more track miles capable of supporting 160 mph Acela service.

C35 includes planning studies to analyze new NEC high-speed segments critical to achieving NEC FUTURE objectives.

The NEC FUTURE vision called for higher speed segments to be evaluated in select locations, such as between Baltimore and Wilmington and between New Haven and Providence. While such initiatives are currently at the conceptual stage, Amtrak and certain states are developing strategies to advance the planning, design, environmental review, and community engagement necessary to develop these new segments and outline the necessary funding requirements.