

High Speed Rail Corridor and Intercity Passenger Rail Service Principles Task Force

Policy Principles

Adopted by APTA Executive Committee May 2, 2009

In 1956 America put forth a vision and a plan to connect the nation through a network of interstate highways. While this program led to construction of a roadway system that is the world's best, the vision of a connected America will not be complete until it becomes an integrated and balanced surface transportation system that includes world-class intercity and high speed rail synergized with air transportation and intercity bus service, and enhanced by local and regional transit services. The high speed and intercity rail program envisioned and recommended by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission (i.e. a system that could accommodate and sustain 46 billion annual passenger miles) provides a sense of scope and scale from which to build. To complete the vision, APTA advocates the following principles:

1. *Vision:* A national network of high speed and intercity passenger rail services should be driven by a vision that maximizes the capacity and the efficiency of the nation's overall transportation network (rail, highway and aviation), and unifies the regions of the nation in promoting safe and efficient mobility choices, economic growth and competitiveness, national security, energy efficiency, efficient goods movement, environmental quality, and interconnected and livable communities. To realize full potential, stations are located and designed to allow ease of transfer to the local and regional bus network, and for pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. Higher density, in-fill, transit oriented developments, at or near the station, help support station costs, and result in higher levels of ridership on high speed and intercity rail lines as well as on feeder systems. This comprehensive, integrated transportation strategy elevates the role of high speed and intercity rail and complements and connects these services with air transportation, the road network and intercity bus service, and with local bus and rail services.
2. *Funding:* For this integrated and balanced vision to be fulfilled, Congress the Administration, states and local communities will need to address the large and growing gap between capital needs and available resources, not only for high speed and intercity rail development but also for existing bus and rail transit, highway and aviation programs. Authorization of and appropriations for federal transportation funding programs should be guided by this unifying vision, and should be funded to the levels needed to achieve national and regional transportation objectives., consistent with APTA's adopted authorization principles.

3. *Program Structure:* The newly established, ongoing high speed rail and intercity rail programs should build on that structure established by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) and affirmed in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA.) These programs should encompass the tracks identified in the High Speed Rail Strategic Plan announced by President Obama on April 16, 2009 (i.e. ready to go projects; programs for developing corridors, and project planning). Programs should encompass the full range of rail passenger system speeds defined in that plan (i.e. HSR Express 150+ mph; HSR Regional 110 – 150 mph; Emerging HSR 90 – 110 mph; Conventional Rail 79 – 90 mph.)
4. *Eligible Recipients:* Funding for all programs should be available to eligible recipients as prescribed in PRIIA, or their designated agents. Private sector entities cannot and should not receive funds directly, but should be encouraged to participate in public private partnerships provided such participation is consistent with state rail plans.
5. *Shared Corridors:* Commuter railroads and other rail operations sharing corridors to be improved using funding pursuant to PRIIA or ARRA should benefit from corridor improvements and should reasonably expect system improvements of its infrastructure and enhancement of services. Such investments should sustain and enhance existing corridor service, with the investments assuring that any negative impacts are averted with improvements as necessary and funding provided for these improvements. An equitable and fair process for negotiating passenger rail operational access on freight railroads and in the use of adjacent freight rail rights of way must also be established, along with reasonable liability terms and legal limits to liability.
6. *Relationship to Key Federal Priorities:* High speed and intercity rail programs should be recognized in federal surface transportation legislation, in federal aviation policy and legislation, and in federal energy and environmental legislation.
7. *How an Ongoing Program Should Work:* Creation of a national rail passenger system map is essential, with input obtained from national, state and regional levels. This national system map should build upon the existing intercity rail network and designated high speed rail corridors. A process must also be defined for considering additional corridors as well as refinement / expansion of existing corridors. The ongoing program should be supported through a federal High Speed and Intercity Rail Passenger Account to be funded through dedicated revenues, with key segments of the system prioritized and funded through an efficiently administered federal process involving multi-year contract authority. As outlined in ARRA, initial federal grants may be up to 100%. PRIIA calls for an 80-20% matching program, and FRA Amtrak-capital state matching grants call for 50-50 match. States / agencies receiving such grants should anticipate the eventual need

to satisfy match requirements, as well as the requirements to demonstrate ongoing operating and maintenance funding sustainability. Prioritization should achieve an ongoing and sequential advancement of projects that result in the full implementation of the national plan. The entire nation will share the collective long term goal of seeing that the entire system is fulfilled.

8. *Inclusion of the Northeast Corridor:* For purposes of clarifying the intent of PRIIA and ARRA, the Northeast Corridor must be included in any high speed rail strategy for the United States. .
9. *Grade Crossing Elimination:* A robust federal high speed rail grade crossing elimination program should be established and adequately funded within the Federal-aid highway program, with recognition to priority corridors and high risk grade crossings within those corridors.
10. *Related Infrastructure Issues:* APTA will continue to provide input to U.S. DOT and Congress on infrastructure and systems issues associated with the development of high speed and intercity rail passenger services, including matters such as positive train control, sealed corridors, interoperability, equipment specifications, the possibility of joint procurement programs, and shared corridor operations.