



Passenger Rail: Current Efforts & MDT's Role

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MDT Rail Programs

- Rail-Highway Crossing Safety program
 - Invests in projects and activities that address safety issues at at-grade highway-rail crossings
- Operation Life Saver focuses on reducing death and injury on railroad tracks
- Montana Essential Freight and Rail Loan Program (MEFRL)
 - No interest revolving loan fund to preserve and enhance freight railroad service on smaller branch lines

MDT Rail Planning Activities

- Administer rail grade crossing safety program
- Planning support when railroads seek abandonment of a line
- Participates in regional groups with an interest in rail
- Update federally required plans, some have a rail component (Freight Plan, TranPlanMT, and studies)
- No federal or state requirement to have a state rail plan

Passenger Rail Funding

- BIL/IIJA capital investment and planning rail grants
 - Grants are competitive and require a nonfederal match
- Currently, no federal operational funding for new/restored long distance routes
 - FRA's Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study Interim Report to Congress states that applying the federal definition of "long-distance routes" appears to preclude the consideration of new routes beyond the routes operated in 2008. This limitation extends to the restoration of discontinued Amtrak routes, such as the NCH.
- Federal funds that MDT receives are statutorily directed and not eligible for capital rail improvement projects or operations

Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Passenger Rail Study



The FRA is conducting an Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study to evaluate the restoration of daily long-distance passenger rail service and the potential for new Amtrak long-distance routes.

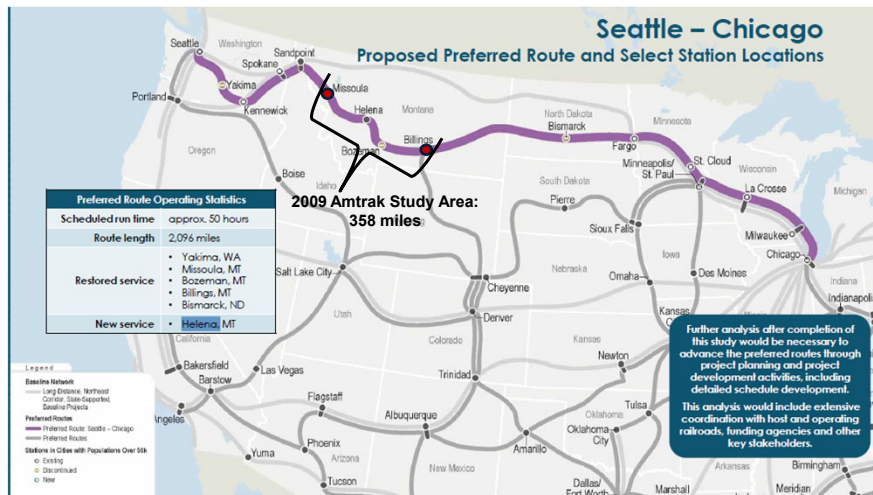


Objective: Create a long-term vision for long-distance passenger rail service and identify:

Potential institutional arrangements, financial requirements, and planning activities needed to implement the vision

Internal and external strategies and stakeholders to coordinate the development and implementation of routes and services

Current FRA Study: NCH Route



Corridor Identification Development Program – 3 Phases

Step 1: SDP Scoping and Initiation	Step 2: Service Development Planning (SDP)	Step 3: Project Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor develops scope, schedule, & budget for planning effort • Cost estimate of SDP determined • Up to \$500k federal, no match required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor develops and completes SDP • Must be approved by FRA • \$ determined through scoping effort (Step 1) • 10% non-federal match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on a phase of implementing the corridor • Sponsor completes NEPA/PE & SDP • \$ determined through SDP (Step 2) • 20% nonfederal match

Passenger Rail Considerations

- Improvements to the southern rail line have not yet been thoroughly defined
- FRA will begin seeking funding and operating partners for selected routes
- From a MT legislative perspective, needs may include:
 - Interstate Rail Compact with affected states
 - Legislation to provide for the subsidization of passenger rail restoration and operation
- FRA's Long Distance Service Study report to Congress will provide an inventory of capital projects, federal and non-federal funding sources, estimated costs and public benefits of service restoration for all proposed routes in the study.

Thank you.
Questions?

