CHAPTER 3 PROPOSED PASSENGER RAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND INVESTMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes ongoing, proposed, and potential initiatives to develop or expand passenger rail services in Kentucky.

3.1. FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO FUND PASSENGER RAIL

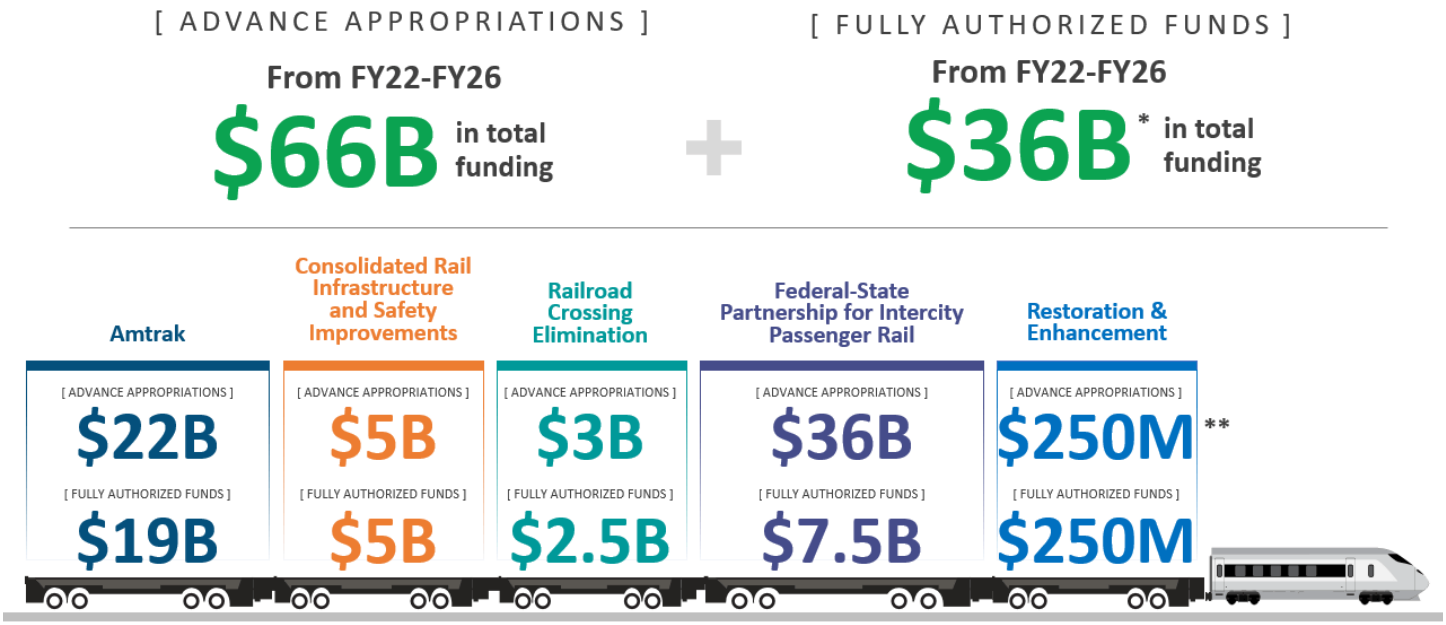
3.1.1. Passenger Rail Funding in the IIJA

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed on November 15, 2021, established new federal programs and funding mechanisms to develop and implement intercity passenger rail service in the U.S. The law also significantly increased the levels of funding for all types of rail transportation, including freight, intercity passenger, commuter, and transit services. Funding for freight and intercity passenger rail projects will be funneled through programs administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), of which the primary ones are: (1) Amtrak, (2) the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program, (3) the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program, (4) the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program, and (5) the Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program.

The IIJA contains $102 billion in total rail funding, including $66 billion from advanced appropriations, and $36 million in authorized funding for the Department of Transportation's rail programs (see **Figure 3-1**). This includes funding to modernize Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and bring new or expanded intercity passenger rail service to areas outside the northeast and mid-Atlantic; refurbish Amtrak's fleet and facilities; and upgrade freight rail service in rural communities and on shared freight-passenger routes.[1]

1. Retrieved from: https://railroads.dot.gov/IIJA. Retrieved in June 2024.

Figure 3-1. IIJA Funding for Rail Programs



** Authorized funds represent an up to amount that require annual appropriations to set funding levels for each fiscal year.*
*** $34.5 billion for grant programs; additional $1.5 billion is authorized for FRA operations and R&D – not included in this graphic. Grants for Restoration & Enhancement (advance appropriations portion) are funded through "takedowns" from Amtrak NN account; not included in totals to avoid double-counting.*

Source: Federal Railroad Administration

The Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant program provides funding for intercity passenger rail transportation projects and was significantly revised in Section 22307 of the IIJA. Changes involved broadening project eligibility to include projects to expand or establish new intercity passenger rail services and fund pre-construction project planning, expanding eligible project locations to include the entire intercity passenger rail network. While there is only a single grant program, the funding is divided into two categories: Northeast Corridor, and non-Northeast Corridor Projects.[2]

The Federal-State Partnership program also provides the funding for the FRA's Corridor Identification and Development Program, a grant program that makes available federal funds for pre-construction activities to carry out the planning, preliminary engineering, and environmental evaluation of new or expanding intercity passenger rail routes. The FRA's Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program provides operating assistance to initiate, restore, or enhance intercity passenger rail service.[3] The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program also provides funding for capital projects that will improve passenger and freight rail transportation systems, including the improvement of intercity passenger rail transportation corridors.[4]

2. Retrieved from: Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program Fact Sheet | FRA (dot.gov). Retrieved June 2024.
3. Retrieved from: Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program | FRA (dot.gov). Retrieved in June 11, 2024..
4. Retrieved from: Federal Railroad Administration, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program: https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs/consolidated-rail-infrastructure-and-safety-2. Retrieved in June 2024.

3.1.2. Corridor ID Program

The Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program is a comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning and development program designed to help guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the country and create a pipeline of intercity passenger rail projects ready for implementation. The IIJA authorized the Secretary of Transportation to establish the program to facilitate the development of intercity passenger rail corridors, and the FRA was delegated the authority to create and administer the program. The Corridor ID Program is intended to become the primary means for directing Federal financial support and technical assistance toward the development of proposals for new or improved intercity passenger rail services throughout the United States.

Public entities seeking to create or expand intercity passenger rail routes are eligible to apply for funding from the program. A passenger corridor that is accepted into the program will advance through a three-step development process that includes:

- **Step 1 – Scoping:** The sponsor develops the scope, schedule, and budget to prepare a Corridor Service Development Plan (see Step 2), accounting for work on-going and/or undertaken to date.
- **Step 2 – Service Development Plan Preparation:** The sponsor prepares a Service Development Plan (SDP) in accordance with the scope, schedule, and budget developed in Step 1 and in coordination with the FRA. The SDP will determine and document how the corridor will be implemented. The Final SDP will include a Capital Project Inventory as part of the Phased Implementation Plan.
- **Step 3 – Preliminary Engineering/NEPA:** In coordination with the FRA, the sponsor completes preliminary engineering and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review for capital projects identified in the SDP (Step 2). Corridors that complete Step 3 will move into the Corridor ID capital project pipeline and may be prioritized for Final Design and Construction funding under the Federal-State Partnership Program or other FRA financial assistance programs.

The FRA's selection of a corridor to participate in the program reflects the agency's interest in advancing the corridor to implementation and ultimately to operation. In December 2023, the FRA announced its selection of initial corridors for acceptance into the Corridor ID Program for Fiscal Years 2022-2023. The FRA selected 69 corridors across 44 states, with the goal of upgrading 15 existing rail routes, adding or extending service on 47 new routes, and advancing seven new high-speed rail projects.[5] Each selected corridor was awarded up to $500,000 for the completion of Step 1 activities. Several of the initial corridors that were selected for the program either pass through Kentucky or serve areas in close proximity to Kentucky. These include the following:

- **Louisville-Indianapolis Passenger Rail Corridor**, sponsored by the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA). This proposed corridor would connect Louisville, Kentucky to Indianapolis, Indiana, and provide new service on an existing alignment over which Amtrak discontinued service in the early 2000s. The KIPDA will enter Step 1 of the program to

5. Retrieved from: https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/2023-12/FRA%2013-23.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.

develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its SDP. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) assisted with the grant application for this project and provided a letter of support to KIDPA.

- **Daily Cardinal Service**, sponsored by Amtrak. This proposed corridor would provide improvements to the existing Amtrak Cardinal service between New York City and Chicago, Illinois, via Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and the States of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois (including Cincinnati, Ohio, and Indianapolis, Indiana) by increasing service frequency from three days per week to daily. Amtrak will enter Step 1 of the program to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its service development plan.
- **Indianapolis-Chicago**, sponsored by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). This proposed corridor would supplement service provided by the existing Amtrak long-distance Cardinal train between Indianapolis, Indiana, and Chicago, IL, by adding new round-trip trains within the corridor and improving travel times. INDOT will enter Step 1 of the program to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its service development plan. This effort is being undertaken in coordination with Amtrak's Corridor ID project to increase service frequency on the entirety of the New York-Chicago Cardinal route from thrice weekly to daily. The KYTC provided a letter of support to INDOT.
- **Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati (3C&D) Corridor**, sponsored by the Ohio Rail Development Commission. This proposed corridor would connect Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati, Ohio, and provide new service on an existing alignment. The Ohio Rail Development Commission will enter Step 1 of the program to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its service development plan.
- **Atlanta-Chattanooga-Nashville-Memphis Corridor**, sponsored by the City of Chattanooga, Tennessee. This proposed corridor would connect Atlanta, Georgia, to Chattanooga, Nashville, and Memphis, Tennessee, and provide new service on existing alignments. The City of Chattanooga will enter Step 1 of the program to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its service development plan.
- **Chicago to Carbondale Corridor**, sponsored by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The proposed corridor would provide improvements to the existing Illini/Saluki service between Chicago and Carbondale, Illinois, by improving travel times and reliability. The Illinois Department of Transportation will enter Step 1 of the program to develop a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing, completing, or documenting its service development plan.

The KYTC is also supporting regional efforts in Warren County and Bowling Green to apply for future federal Corridor ID Program funding to study a new Cincinnati-Louisville-Bowling Green-Nashville intercity passenger rail corridor.

Although there are some long-distance train routes and potential future high-speed rail routes that have been selected for Corridor ID funding, the majority of the services that will be developed under the program are new conventional-style passenger rail corridors or extensions of existing passenger rail corridors on routes of 750 miles or less.

Under the terms of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), states (or groups of states) are responsible for funding the costs of Amtrak trains that operate on routes of 750 miles or less. (Amtrak trains that operate on routes of more than 750 miles are defined as long-distance

trains, which are funded predominantly by Amtrak through annual grants provided by Congress and administered by the FRA.) Kentucky currently is served only by long-distance Amtrak trains. Any future effort that results in the introduction of an Amtrak service in Kentucky on a route of 750 miles or less will require the state, perhaps in partnership with regional or local entities, to provide public money to support the operation.

3.1.3. Daily Long-Distance Service Study

Section 22214 of the IIJA required the FRA, under delegation from the Secretary of Transportation, to conduct an Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study to evaluate the restoration of daily intercity passenger rail service and the potential for new Amtrak long-distance routes.

Long-distance routes are Amtrak routes over 750 miles that connect a mix of urban and rural areas; these routes typically operate one trip per day in each direction, and Amtrak receives annual support from Congress for operating costs associated with long-distance routes. The FRA's Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study was intended to create a foundation for further planning of potential future long-distance services.[6] Under IIJA stipulations, the FRA was required to conduct a study to assess the restoration of daily intercity rail passenger service along any Amtrak long-distance routes that were discontinued, as well as any Amtrak long-distance routes with nondaily service. The FRA may also assess potential new Amtrak long-distance routes in its evaluation, taking into consideration whether those new routes would:

- Link and serve large and small communities as part of a regional rail network
- Advance the economic and social well-being of rural areas of the United States
- Provide enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system
- Reflect public engagement and local and regional support for restored passenger rail service

FRA conducted the study between 2022 and 2024, completing the required analyses and conducting 24 regional working group meetings with stakeholders in 21 cities across the country. FRA solicited comments and study participation from state DOTs, Amtrak, Class I freight railroads, short line railroads, metropolitan planning organizations, regional passenger rail authorities, local officials, federally recognized tribes, and the public. The final report was released in January 2025, and included a proposed network of "selected preferred route options" for future planning and development. The selected route options are not FRA proposals for service, and are not intended to restrict or preclude future plans or planning activities. Among the 15 long-distance routes identified as "selected preferred route options," two pass through Kentucky, and a third serves cities in close proximity to Kentucky. These routes are:

- Chicago – Miami (serving Louisville, Bowling Green, and Nashville)
- Detroit – New Orleans (serving Cincinnati, Louisville, Bowling Green, and Nashville)
- Dallas/Fort Worth – New York (which would not pass directly through Kentucky but would serve Indianapolis and Cincinnati)

Figure 3-2 shows a map of the two selected preferred long-distance train route options that pass

6. Retrieved from: https://fralongdistancerailstudy.org/. Retrieved in June 2024.

through Kentucky. The proposed Detroit – New Orleans route through Kentucky is shown in gold, and the proposed Chicago – Miami route through Kentucky is shown in blue.

Figure 3-2. Preferred Routes from Long-Distance Service Study in Kentucky

Source: Federal Railroad Administration

The development and implementation of any preferred long-distance routes identified by the study will require significant additional time, resources, and analysis to further identify and refine infrastructure improvements, equipment needs and other capital projects, as well as costs, funding sources, and other key items needed for implementation. Currently, there is no financial support to further advance the preferred route options to be identified by the FRA's Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study.

3.2. REGIONAL PASSENGER RAIL STUDIES

3.2.1. FRA Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study

In 2021, the FRA released the Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study, a multi-state planning effort to develop a comprehensive vision and governance model for an integrated regional rail network to advance passenger rail planning, procurement, and operations in the Midwest.[7] The study established a strategic 40-year vision for the Midwest's passenger rail network, addressing topics including network configuration, service levels, financing, and governance. The KYTC participated in this study as a complementary jurisdiction for the planning and development of a regional rail network.

The Midwest regional plan was one of several regional passenger rail plans prepared by the FRA, under requirements set forth in PRIIA; others included the Southwest Regional Rail Planning Study and the Southeast Regional Rail Planning Study. These regional rail planning efforts are intended to support existing state rail plans and long-range transportation plans.

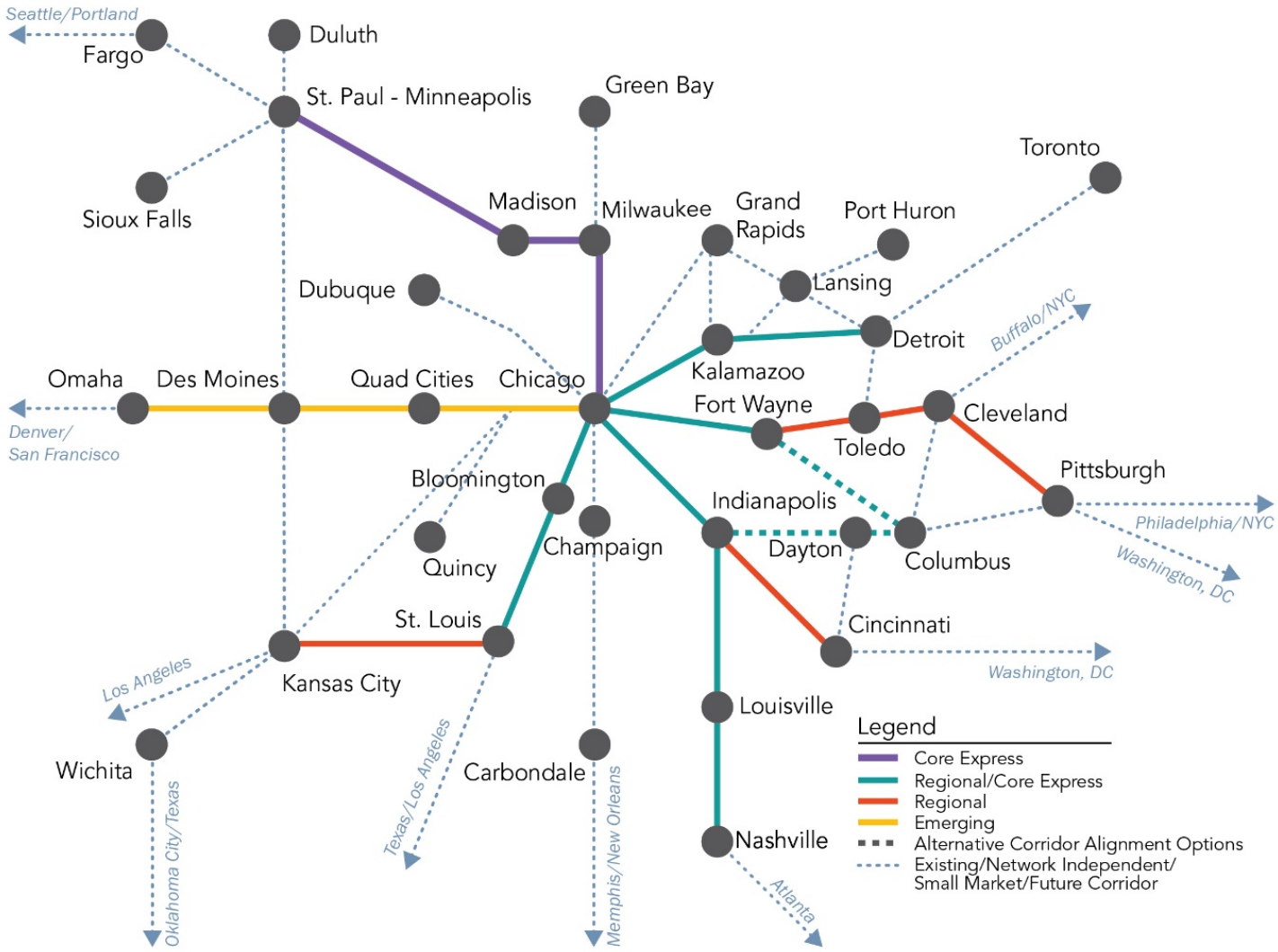
As part of the Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study, an extensive 12-state market assessment was conducted to evaluate the current travel market and demand to understand travel patterns by mode between major markets. The study utilized the FRA's CONceptual NEtwork Connections Tool (CONNECT), which serves as the analytical foundation for FRA-led regional passenger rail planning studies, to develop an initial network of potential corridors where intercity passenger rail could provide a feasible passenger transportation alternative. The study established three "service tiers" to define the types of service frequencies, service characteristics, and infrastructure levels proposed for each proposed corridor. The service tiers can be summarized as follows:

- **Core Express:** Core express service would operate on corridors serving major metropolitan centers. Trains would operate under electric power on dedicated tracks except in terminal areas at speeds of 125 mph or higher, with frequent service provided.
- **Regional:** Regional services would operate on corridors connecting mid-size urban areas with each other or with larger metropolitan areas. Trains could operate under electric or diesel power, using both dedicated and shared tracks, at speeds between 90 and 125 mph, with frequent service provided.
- **Emerging:** Emerging services would operate on corridors connecting mid-sized and smaller urban areas with each other or with larger metropolitan areas. Trains would operate on shared tracks at speeds of up to 90 mph.

The study's initial set of corridors and proposed service levels are shown in **Figure 3-3**. The study does not identify specific routes or alignments for each corridor, however. Estimated costs, benefits, and funding of the network plan will drive decisions regarding future investments, environmental studies, and planning activities.

7. Retrieved from: https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/2021-10/Final%20Report-MWRRP%20with%20Appendices%20PDFa.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.

Figure 3-3. Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study Proposed Network



Source: Federal Railroad Administration

As seen in Figure 3-3, Kentucky would be served by a Regional/Core Express route (defined as a proposed regional route with Core Express potential) extending from Nashville through Louisville and Indianapolis to Chicago. In addition, Kentuckians also could be expected to use the proposed regional corridor connecting Cincinnati and Indianapolis. The study anticipates that the identified corridors and services will require long-term implementation and an incremental phasing of construction and service frequencies, based on the results of additional in-depth planning efforts and available funding sources.

3.2.2. Tennessee Passenger Rail Study

In June 2023, the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) released a study that evaluated and prioritized intercity passenger rail corridors for potential future development

in Tennessee. The report, entitled "Back on Track? Intercity Passenger Rail Options for Tennessee,"[8] was prepared in response to legislation passed by the Tennessee General Assembly and signed by the Governor in 2022 (Public Chapter 1114 and Public Chapter 1124, Acts of 2022), which directed TACIR to study and make recommendations regarding the potential for passenger rail service or other suitable alternatives for linking the major cities in each region of the state and beyond. The state General Assembly action was prompted by an evaluation of future traffic conditions on Tennessee highways conducted by the Tennessee Department of Transportation, which found that trip times between Tennessee's most populous cities could increase by up to an hour in coming years.

To identify potential passenger rail routes, TACIR began with the conclusions and recommendations from two regional intercity passenger rail studies sponsored by the FRA, the Southeast Regional Rail Plan and the Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study. TACIR then conducted additional analysis that included stakeholder interviews, a route's use of the existing freight rail network, a route's ability to connect the most populated cities in the state's different with each other and with population centers in other states, and whether the route would connect to the existing national rail network. After completing its analysis, TACIR concluded that intercity passenger rail service has the potential to improve mobility and the state's economy, and selected five corridors for further study, with a prioritization ranking based on tiers, with Tier 1 being the highest priority. **Table 3-1** depicts the plan's selected corridors, ranked by tier.

Table 3-1. Tennessee Passenger Rail Corridors by Tier

Tier 1 Route
Nashville, TN to Chattanooga, TN to Atlanta, GA
Tier 2 Routes
Memphis, TN to Nashville, TN
Chattanooga, TN to Knoxville, TN to Bristol, VA
Tier 3 Routes
Memphis, TN to Carbondale, IL to Chicago, IL
Nashville, TN to Louisville, KY

Source: Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

In addition, the study recommended that:

- The TDOT submit data and documentation to the FRA to support the FY 2022 Corridor ID Program application from the City of Chattanooga for development of an Atlanta-Chattanooga-Nashville-Memphis intercity passenger rail corridor.
- The TDOT submit Corridor ID Program applications to the FRA for the Chattanooga to Knoxville to Bristol route and consider submitting applications for the other Tier 3 routes at the next funding opportunity.
- The State of Tennessee create an office of rail and public transportation within the TDOT;

8. Retrieved from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tacir/2023publications/2023_PassengerRail.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.

collaborate with Virginia to identify opportunities to maximize the viability of rail corridors that might connect with that state and the wider Amtrak network; and evaluate intercity bus service options along certain key routes (Memphis-Nashville via US-64, and Memphis-Nashville-Knoxville-Bristol via I-40 and I-81) in coordination with the goals of the Transportation Modernization Act.

3.2.3. High Speed Rail Planning Study

The KYTC participated in a 2012 High Speed Rail Planning Study with the states of Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.[9] The study was undertaken by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the need for, and effectiveness of, high-speed rail for three corridors in the southeastern United States:

- Atlanta, GA to Birmingham, AL
- Atlanta, GA to Macon, GA to Jacksonville, FL
- Atlanta, GA to Chattanooga, TN to Nashville, TN to Louisville, KY

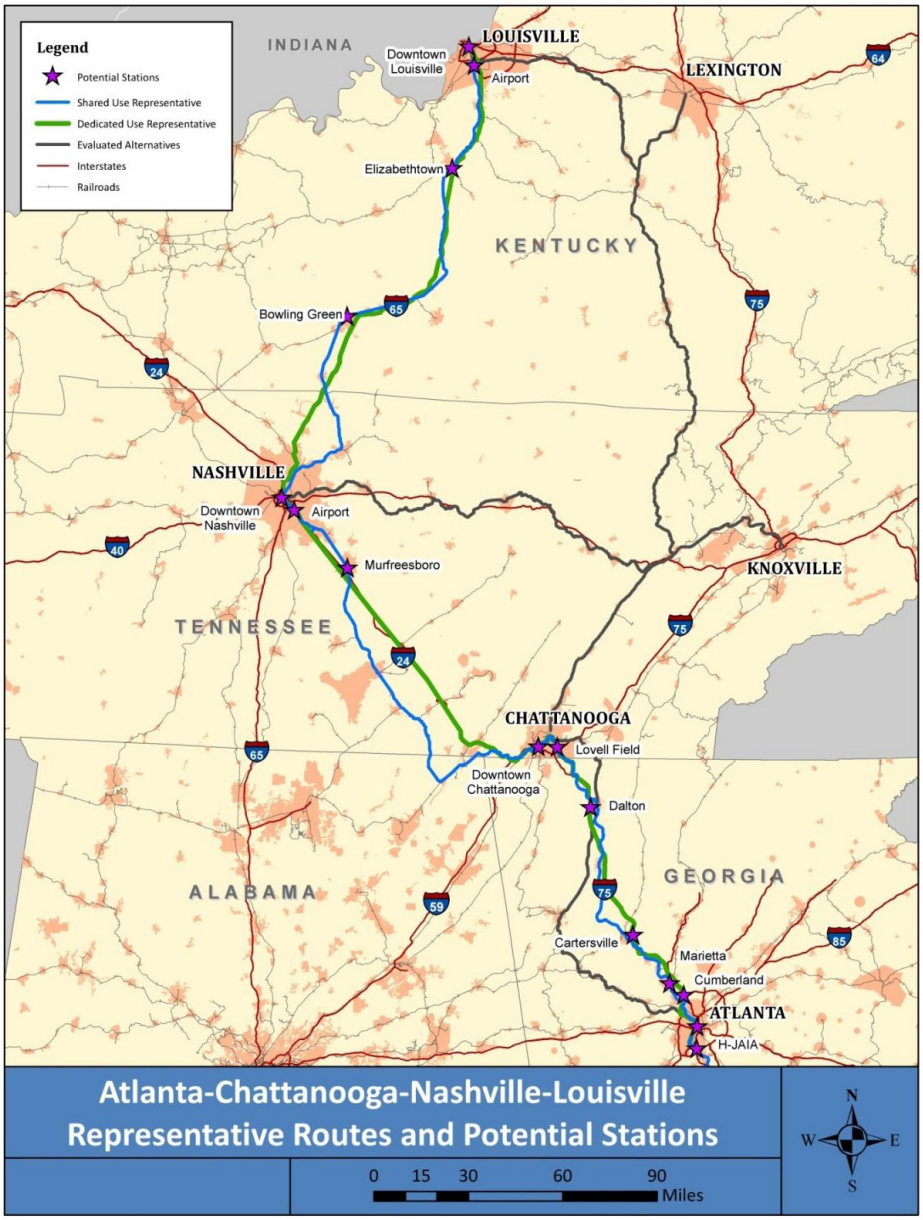
Three types of technologies were evaluated: Emerging High Speed Rail (90-110 mph) using existing rail corridors owned and operated by freight railroads; Express High Speed Rail (180-220 mph) using newly constructed dedicated, electrified, grade-separated track; and a maglev alternative (more than 220 mph) in the Atlanta-Louisville corridor. (Maglev, a term derived from magnetic levitation, is a method of propulsion that uses magnetic levitation to propel trains with magnets rather than with steel wheels, axles, and bearings.) A representative route was identified for each corridor and service type. These routes were not intended to be the preferred or recommended alternative, but served as representative examples to evaluate high-speed rail performance in the corridors. With respect to Kentucky, the Atlanta-Louisville corridor would extend from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to downtown Louisville, as shown in **Figure 3-4**.

Source: 3D motion / Adobe Stock

9. https://transportation.ky.gov/MultimodalFreight/Documents/GA,%20AL,%20TN,%20KY%20High%20Speed%20Rail%20Study%20-%202012.pdf. Retrieved in August 2024.

The Emerging High Speed Rail service, a shared route, was proposed to follow a CSXT line. One dedicated route was proposed for both the Express High-Speed Rail alternative and the maglev alternative. This route would follow I-75 from Atlanta, Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee; I-24 from Chattanooga to Nashville, Tennessee; and I-65 from Nashville to Louisville, Kentucky. Proposed station stops are identified with a star symbol on the map in **Figure 3-4**. With the exception of Marietta, Georgia, which would only have a station under the Emerging High Speed Rail alternative, all alternatives would have stations at the locations identified on the map.

Figure 3-4. Proposed High-Speed Rail Route from Atlanta to Louisville



Source: Atlanta to Chattanooga to Nashville to Louisville High Speed Rail Study, Georgia Department of Transportation, 2012

Table 3-2 depicts the estimated service characteristics, ridership and revenue, capital costs, and

operations and maintenance costs for each corridor alternative for the years 2021 to 2040.

Table 3-2. Estimated Costs and Operational Statistics for Atlanta to Louisville High Speed Rail Scenarios, 2021-2040

Scenario Characteristic	Emerging High Speed	Express High Speed	Maglev
Distance (Atlanta-Louisville)	489.8 miles	422.2 miles	422.2 miles
Trip Time (Atlanta-Louisville)	6 hours, 55 minutes	3 hours, 32 minutes	3 hours, 2 minutes
Avg. Speed (Atlanta-Louisville)	72 mph	122 mph	143 mph
Frequency (Atlanta-Louisville)	5 round trips	12 round trips	12 round trips
Ridership	102.0 million	110.7 million	116.2 million
Capital Costs ($2010)	$11.6 billion	$32.7 billion	$43.0 billion
O&M Costs ($2010)	$2.8 billion	$5.8 billion	$4.4 billion
Revenue ($2010)	$4.2 billion	$6.4 billion	$6.8 billion
Avg. Fare ($2010)	$41.22	$57.87	$58.57

Source: Atlanta to Chattanooga to Nashville to Louisville High Speed Rail Study, Georgia Department of Transportation, 2012

The study concluded that high-speed rail service in the Atlanta-Chattanooga-Nashville-Louisville corridor presents an opportunity to provide needed transportation solutions and promote economic development. While high-speed rail is not the only transportation solution, the study showed that high-speed passenger rail would give consumers improved mobility and transportation mode choices, with connectivity to major cities such as Atlanta, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Louisville through commercial centers and national destinations.

3.3. AMTRAK INITIATIVES

In addition to the Federal and regional projects discussed in this chapter, Amtrak is also advancing initiatives to improve existing services and plan for future service expansions.

3.3.1. Amtrak Five Year Strategic Plan

Each year, Amtrak releases a five-year strategic plan to satisfy requirements under United States Code, Title 49, Section 24320. In March 2024, Amtrak released its Fiscal Year (FY) 24-29 “Five Year Plans,” which outline strategic five-year initiatives for each service line and asset line between FY 2024 and FY 2029. These plans do not identify initiatives for individual trains but focus on overall improvements that benefit particular types of services, including long-distance trains and state-supported regional trains, regardless of location.

Amtrak’s Five-Year Service and Asset Line Plan summarizes the strategies, opportunities, and needs

facing the railroad's different service offerings and resources.[10] The plan does not identify the establishment of new long-distance routes as a strategy or initiative. It does, however, support the introduction and expansion of regional, state-supported passenger rail corridors of up to 750 miles in length. Amtrak's five-year plan for the Long-Distance Service Line, which includes the Cardinal and City of New Orleans trains that serve Kentucky, lists the following four major initiatives:

- **Traditional Dining Expansion:** On long-distance trains equipped with dining cars, Amtrak provides a traditional dining experience for passengers that features seasonal menus with a variety of entrée selections for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and a complimentary alcoholic beverage served with dinner. Traditional dining was extended to the Silver Meteor and Silver Star trains in 2023, bringing the total of routes offering traditional dining services to eight. Starting in November 2024, the Silver Star route has been temporarily combined with the Capitol Limited route to form the Floridian, a through Chicago-Washington, DC-Miami route. This route currently offers traditional dining, restoring this amenity to the former Capitol Limited route. Other trains offering traditional are the Auto Train, California Zephyr, Coast Starlight, Empire Builder, Southwest Chief, and Sunset Limited. Passengers ticketed on the Texas Eagle through cars that are transported by the Sunset Limited also can experience traditional dining between San Antonio and Los Angeles.
- **Enhancement to Fleet:** Amtrak has embarked on several programs to enhance the equipment used on its long-distance trains. Major initiatives include the following:
    - During FY23, Amtrak began an interior refurbishment of the bi-level Superliner Fleet that operates on nine of Amtrak's 15 long-distance routes. The Superliner Project will enhance nearly 400 passenger cars, over 100 of which have already been refreshed and are in revenue service. Additionally, this latest phase of the project formally expanded the scope of the refresh beyond Coach and Business Class cars by including Sleeping Cars, Dining Cars, and Superliner bi-level Sightseer Lounge cars.
    - Amtrak will begin a refresh of all Viewliner I Sleeping Cars in 2024, to better align the in-room experience between the Viewliner I and the newer Viewliner II Sleeping Cars that both operate on eastern routes with single-level equipment, including the Cardinal.
    - In addition to its fleet refurbishment programs, Amtrak has begun a two-year program to accelerate the restoration to service of cars in need of repair or overhaul. Over a dozen long-distance cars have re-entered service under the program, with a total of 63 cars projected to be restored.
    - Amtrak has also ordered 125 ALC-42 locomotives (see **Figure 3-5**)—the most energy-efficient in the industry—aimed to reduce emissions and consume less fuel while reaching a top speed of 125 mph. Over three dozen engines are now in service.

10. Retrieved from: https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/businessplanning/Amtrak-Service-Asset-Line-Plans-FY24-29.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.

- **Improved Accessibility:** Strategies to improve access to Amtrak equipment for mobility impaired passengers include the following:
    - A redesigned accessible bathroom is being added to 23 Superliner I Coach cars. These new rooms accommodate larger wheelchairs and include a changing room.
    - An initial investment of $560 million brought 103 Amtrak stations to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Amtrak is on track to make all stations for which it has ADA responsibility fully compliant by 2028.
- **New Product Launches:** During 2023, several programs were introduced to improve customers' experiences prior to travel, at the station, and on the train. In Spring 2023, Amtrak launched a comprehensive notification service that relays key updates to customers via email, text messages, and push notifications through the Amtrak mobile app. This allows Amtrak customer service teams to notify customers of any service disruptions whether at the station or on the train. Amtrak installed 200 new ADA-compliant ticketing kiosks across over 150 stations. These ticketing kiosks offer customers an updated user interface and "minimum touch" features that allow for a more enjoyable and seamless experience.

Figure 3-5. Amtrak ALC-42 Locomotive

Source: Amtrak

The five-year plan for the Long-Distance Service Line also includes the following overall strategies:

- **Empower People:** Key activities in the next five years include developing tools and training for front-line employees and the operational teams.
- **Pursue Product Initiatives:** Amtrak is enhancing the private room and long-distance coach products to better meet current customer needs, and will pursue the following other product initiatives to improve the customer experience and attract new riders:
    - Refresh the interiors of long-distance cars. Upgrades include enhancing nearly 400 passenger cars in the Superliner fleet and undertaking a Viewliner I refresh (49 Sleepers), which is scheduled to begin in FY24.
    - Improve food and beverage offerings. Amtrak will address recommendations and opportunities for improvement identified by its Food and Beverage Working Group study, such as reintroducing traditional dining on additional long-distance routes and redefining the Food and Beverage vision for the Long-Distance Service Line.

  - Improve accessibility. Better accessibility will result from redesigned accessible bathrooms being added to 23 Superliner I Coach cars that will accommodate larger wheelchairs and include a changing room; and 100% ADA compliance by 2028 at all Amtrak-responsible stations.
  - Focus on communications. Improve communication with customers during delays and service disruptions, especially via email, text message, and push notifications via the Amtrak App.
  - Install Wi-Fi equipment on the remainder of the Superliner cars used on long-distance trains in the West. Enhance Wi-Fi on the eastern long-distance trains that use single-level equipment.
  - Emphasize the benefits of private sleeping compartments as an accommodation that offers physical distancing space, privacy, comfort, lounge access, complimentary meals, priority boarding, and more. Efforts to promote these benefits include new promotional media campaigns, new experiential travel landing pages on Amtrak.com, flash sales offering free companion travel, and more prominent display of room choices when passengers book travel on Amtrak.com and the Amtrak app.

- **Invest in a New Long-Distance Fleet:** In addition to interior refreshes and the ongoing entry of new locomotives into service, Amtrak initiated a procurement process in CY22 for the new Long-Distance fleet. With funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Amtrak is seeking competitive bids from car builders to replace long-distance rail car fleets. Amtrak released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in late 2023, and based on the RFP schedule, target to negotiate terms and secure final funding approval by year-end CY24. The acquisition of new equipment will provide the opportunity to accomplish several goals, including:
  - Modernizing equipment and amenities to support the future Long-Distance Value Proposition and meet the updated operating model for improving customer satisfaction and financial performance.
  - Improving the customer experience with private room beds that can be self-deployed when passengers wish; offering a better experience for the disabled community with a fully accessible core trainset that includes coaches, private rooms and dining and lounge cars; and providing new onboard services.
  - Redesigning train consists to match passenger demand, create operating efficiencies, and reduce capital needs.
  - Reducing car and locomotive maintenance and turnaround costs.
  - Reducing engine and car related mechanical delays to improve on-time performance.
  - Improving sustainability with more sustainable materials, less trash, and reduced fuel consumption and emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.
- **Improve Long-Distance Utility and Reliability:** Continue to use a data-driven approach to address host railroad and Amtrak-related delays, and work with the host railroads to

understand the causes of host railroad and Amtrak responsible delays, opportunities to mitigate them, and the actions required to improve on-time performance. The release of revised Metrics and Standards for measuring the performance of Amtrak services by the FRA in FY 2021 and the requirement of all host railroads and Amtrak to certify the viability of Amtrak operating schedules is providing a framework for enforcing Amtrak's right of preference over freight transportation and offers a path for addressing on-time performance issues.

Source: Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

- **Further Deploy New ALC-42 Locomotives:** Amtrak will continue to add new ALC-42 locomotives to its equipment fleet in FY24 and beyond. By the end of FY23, 38 ALC-42 locomotives had been deployed, and the balance of the entire 125 ALC-42 locomotive order is projected to be deployed by FY31.
- **Increase Operational Resilience, Efficiency, and Effectiveness:** With the addition of new equipment, Amtrak will look for ways to optimize its business model, with a focus on reducing car and locomotive maintenance costs and turnaround times. The evolution of the operating model is also expected to improve fleet availability.
- **Improve Asset Utilization:** Amtrak is identifying and undertaking initiatives to improve asset utilization and fleet availability on the existing long-distance network to increase and better deploy capacity to meet demand.
- **Grow the Business:** Amtrak sees opportunities for growth in its long-distance business by incrementally increasing capacity and ridership while controlling costs, including:
    - Increasing ridership incrementally on existing trains by restoring 63 long-distance cars to service, which will increase capacity to capture additional ridership demand. Currently planned equipment restorations on existing long-distance routes within the Five-Year Plan time frame include:
        - Restoring a Viewliner II dining car to the Crescent in FY24
        - Restoring a Superliner sightseer lounge car to the Texas Eagle beginning in Q1 FY25
        - Operating a transition sleeper on all Superliner long-distance routes except the Auto Train by Q1 FY26
        - Adding coaches and sleeping cars on routes throughout the long-distance network with the highest passenger demand and revenue potential

- Supporting the implementation of expanded long-distance service, based on the results of the FRA Long-Distance Service Study (see Section 3.1) and the availability of funding and equipment.

  Amtrak will prioritize the increase to daily frequency of its two existing tri-weekly long-distance routes, the Cardinal and the Sunset Limited.

Table 3-3 depicts the strategic plan's projections for ridership on the two long-distance trains serving Kentucky.

Table 3-3. Projected Ridership of Long-Distance Amtrak Trains Serving Kentucky

Route	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
Cardinal	94,000	94,600	95,600	96,500	97,700	98,500
City of New Orleans	257,600	259,400	262,100	264,700	267,800	270,000
All Long-Distance Trains	4,426,400	4,519,900	4,565,100	4,610,500	4,666,500	4,703,200

Note: Ridership projections for the Cardinal and City of New Orleans are for the entire national route
Source: Amtrak FY24-29 Five-Year Service Line Plans

3.3.2. Amtrak Station Improvements

The five-year plan also documents Amtrak's plans to improve stations to make them compliant with Americans With Disability Act (ADA) requirements.[11] Amtrak's ADA Stations Program focuses on stations for which Amtrak has ADA responsibility. Out of the 515 train stations in the U.S. used by Amtrak trains, Amtrak has sole ADA responsibility at 147 stations and shared ADA responsibility at another 238 stations.

The three top priority efforts in this plan include (1) improving station platform accessibility for people who use wheeled mobility devices at the stations where Amtrak has ADA responsibility for platforms; (2) installing or improving Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) and audible public address systems at stations for which Amtrak has ADA responsibility; and (3) improving accessibility to or within station buildings at stations where Amtrak has ADA responsibility. Out of the 385 stations where Amtrak has some type of ADA responsibility, Amtrak has identified the following needs among its top priority efforts:

- Identified 30 stations with known or potential train access deficiencies, and completed improvements at 18 of those stations to date
- Identified 120 stations with known or potential PIDS deficiencies, and completed improvements at 96 of those stations to date
- Identified 47 stations with known or potential station access and/or key amenity deficiencies, and completed improvements at all 47 of those stations

11. Retrieved from: https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/businessplanning/Amtrak-Stations-ALP-Appendices-FY24-29.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.

Additional initiatives include adding level boarding platforms, where required by law, and pursuing more integrated boarding solutions (based on Amtrak's Platform Design Policy) where level boarding is not required by law due to the presence of existing freight traffic adjacent to the platform. Platform projects, which may include level boarding platform projects and low-level platform projects, will be funded after stations with conditions in the three highest priority categories are addressed. Amtrak's ADA Stations Program is currently advancing 148 station designs, with 58 additional designs set to begin in FY24, and 91 station construction projects, with 23 additional projects set to being in FY24, as part of the railroad's commitment to working toward 100% accessibility program completion by 2029.

Among the four passenger rail stations served by Amtrak trains in Kentucky, Amtrak has full ADA responsibility for three stations (Fulton, Maysville, and South Shore).[12] In 2023, Amtrak and the City of South Shore opened a new fully compliant station platform and shelter at South Shore (see **Figure 3-6**). Both the Fulton and Maysville stations will be receiving ADA improvements beginning in 2025. Amtrak expects to begin construction in Fiscal Year 2025 on a modern, ADA-compliant passenger station with parking, accessible platform access, and improved lighting to replace the existing obsolete facility in Fulton.[13] By early 2025, Amtrak had begun work to replace the platform at the Maysville station with an ADA-compliant boarding platform.

Figure 3-6. ADA-Compliant Platform and Shelter at South Shore

Source: www.greatamericanstations.com

12. Retrieved from: https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/businessplanning/Amtrak-Stations-ALP-Appendix-FY21-26.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.
13. Retrieved from: https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/statefactsheets/KENTUCKY23.pdf. Retrieved in June 2024.