

## RBC TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS-LLC

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To: RAILCET  
From: Ray Chambers  
Date: November 4, 2022  
Subject: Intelligence Report—APTA Intercity Passenger Rail Steering Committee Meeting—The New CID program capital program could be large.

### Meeting Highlights

Last Friday was the regular monthly meeting of the APTA Intercity Passenger Rail Steering Committee. The highlight was a presentation by Doug Gascon Chief of the Program and Policy Development Division of the Federal Railroad Administration.

The FRA now has significant funding and will control grants of intercity rail projects. The FRA is about to release two Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA's). The first, which they hope to get out later in this month, will be for the Federal State Partnership program. There will be two notices. The first request will be for projects on the Northeast Corridor. The second will be for intercity passenger rail projects outside the NEC. About \$2.2 billion will be released as a result of these NOFAs. The NOFAs will have a 90-day response time. Most of this funding will go into construction, rehabilitation, and equipment.

In addition, there will be a Solicitation in December for projects to be submitted into the Corridor ID (CID) program. Any intercity passenger rail project on corridors under 750 miles is eligible. This can include a new corridor or extension of any existing state subsidized corridor (there are 30 current such corridors). A minimum of \$12 billion in grant funds will be available for these projects over the next five years. The applicant can be any state or government body. Agreements must be negotiated with the host railroads and Doug made clear Amtrak does not need to be the operator. The operator can be any qualified passenger carrier, such as Transdev or Herzog.

I ask for clarification on the interface between the NOFAs (making grants available –probably issued later this month) and the FRA Solicitation, (expected in December). The NOFAs make it possible to immediately apply for money. The Solicitation is not a direct request for money but submitting a Plan to FRA CID program for an intercity rail operation. Doug implied the coordination between the two is a work in progress. The State/authority responder to the Solicitation seeking to inject a project into the CID, should identify federal grant requests, or even future requests where possible, in response to the Solicitation. Once the Solicitation

project is submitted by the Applicant and accepted by FRA into the CID program, FRA will team with the Applicant and provide advice on crafting that new passenger operation. If an early proposal can be complete enough to allow grant funding now to inaugurate a corridor operation in the near term, that would be excellent. That early operation might be a piece of a larger regional rail network—but able to stand on its own. However, in most cases additional information and clearances will be needed by FRA before grants can be committed and a proposed passenger service can actually be put into operation. In that case, FRA will make up to a half million dollars available to each applicant for further planning. FRA has indicated they will Team with the Applicant to refine all parts of the project including the total financial package.

Following the FRA presentation, there was discussion over the concern that a Republican House will attempt to divert the intercity rail money to other causes such as highways or even tax reduction. Chris Brady, Chair of the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee, announced a plan to hold a series of Webinars on the CID projects being submitted to the FRA. “Messages” should be developed by APTA about these projects and transmitted from local supporters “back home” to Members of Congress—especially Republicans. This will be an effort to build a political support base for intercity passenger expansion within the House and Senate Republican caucus.

The unfolding of the Corridor ID program will be of foremost importance to the RAILCET contractors and unions. For most projects, the host railroads will require a considerable amount of capital work to accommodate expanded passenger trains while protecting freight throughput across these corridors. The primary partners in the CID projects will be the State/authority (applicant for grants), Host Railroads and Operators. However, in cases where there will be significant rail construction there is no reason rail construction contractors could not be included in partnering teams.

#### AGENDA- APTA INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL STEERING COMMITTEE

1. *Opening Remarks from HS&IPR Committee Chair Chris Brady*
2. *FRA Report – David Valenstein*
3. *Washington Update*
4. *New HS&IPR Committee Webinar Series Focusing on the Project Pipeline*
5. *March 2023 APTA HS&IPR Conference / Legislative Conference*
6. *New directions for SPEEDLINES;*
7. *APTA TRANSform Conference / Observations*
8. *Work Program / Strategic Directions*
9. *UIC World Congress on High-Speed Rail: March 7-10, 2023, Morocco*
10. *Open Mic: News / Issues / Information Sharing*
11. *Next meeting: Friday, December 2, 2022*