

Introduction and Update



Schuylkill River
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

February 2024

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

- Reading-Philadelphia Passenger Rail History
- SRPRA – A New Agency
- Agency Organization
- Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Program
- SRPRA Project Plan and Project Timeline
- Technical Details
- Next Steps
- Contact Information



Reading–Philadelphia Passenger Rail History

- Philadelphia & Reading Rail Road founded April 4, 1833 to haul coal between Pottsville, Reading and Philadelphia.
- Passenger rail volumes reach record levels during World War II.
- Service shrinks to peak-period-only schedule in the 1960s.
- SEPTA assumes responsibility in 1976.
- SEPTA suspends service in 1981.
- Schuylkill River Metro light rail transit project cancelled in 2006; NS studied heavy rail alternative in 2005.
- Recent studies prepared by PennDOT (2020) and the Berks Alliance (2020)

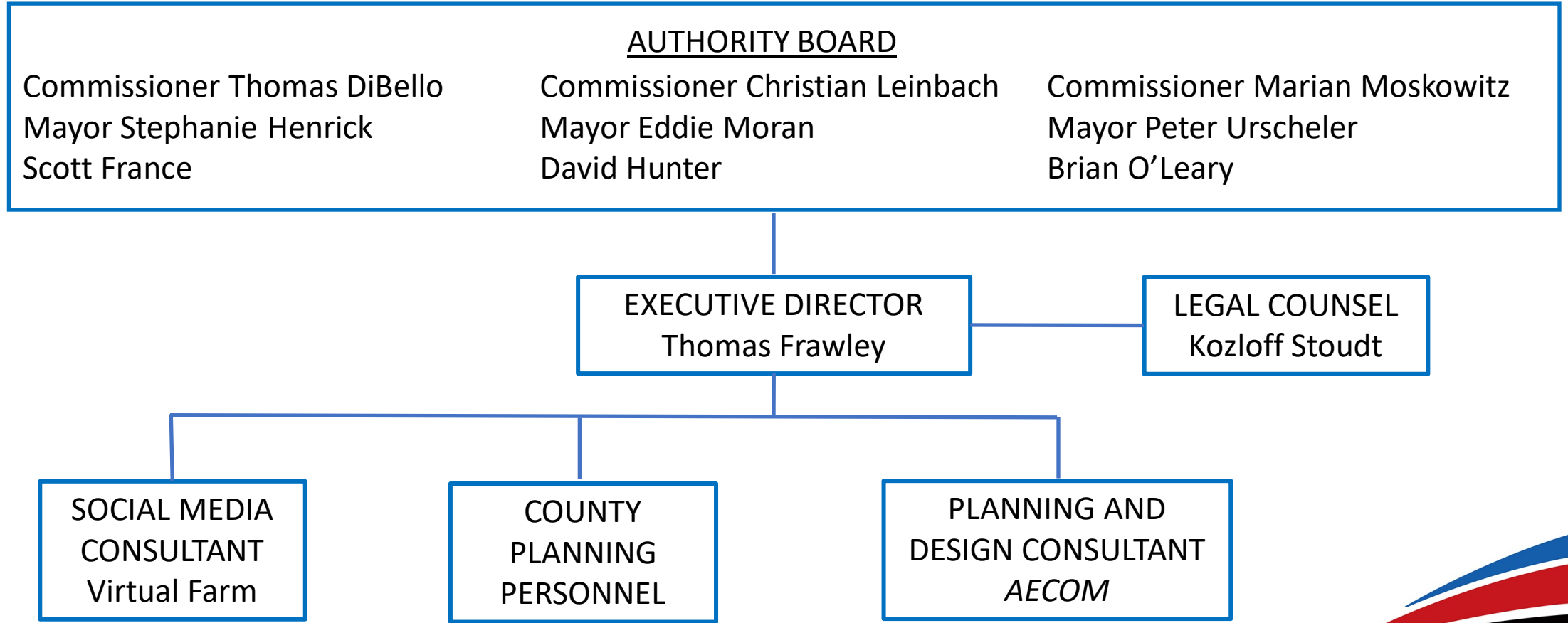


SRPRA – A New Agency

- Committee formed in 2021 by Berks, Montgomery and Chester Counties.
- Authority incorporated June 16, 2022
- Hired Executive Director in September 2022
- Engaged consultant Transportation for America (T4A) in October 2022
- Submitted FRA CIDP application in March 2023
- Accepted by FRA into CIDP December 8, 2023
- Selected AECOM as planning and design consultant in December 2023



SRPRA Organization



Federal Railroad Administration CIDP

- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is part of US Department of Transportation (USDOT).
- The pathway for all intercity passenger rail corridor projects is the FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP).
- Program created as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), aka the Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law, on November 15, 2021.
- SRPRA submitted Expression of Interest letter to FRA in July 2022 and CIDP application in March 2023.
- SRPRA accepted into CIDP December 8, 2023.



FRA CIDP Includes 3 Steps

PROGRAM PHASE	MATCH
Step 1: Develop Scope, Schedule and Cost Estimate to Prepare Service Development Plan (SDP)	Up to \$500k with No Match Required
Step 2: Prepare Service Development Plan	No Ceiling Identified; 10% Match Required
Step 3: Engineering and Design (30%)	No Ceiling Identified; 20% Match Required

SRPRA acceptance into CIDP includes Step 1 funding.



FRA CIDP Step 1

- Scoping Tasks to Prepare:
 - Statement of Work
 - Schedule
 - Budget
- Project Management Plan (PMP) to address:
 - Project management team roles and responsibilities
 - Processes and procedures for maintenance of schedule and budget
 - Compliance with federal reporting requirements



FRA CIDP Step 2

- Service Development Plan (SDP) consisting of:
 - Rationale, Goals and Objectives
 - Identification of Alternatives
 - Planning Methodology
 - Demand and Revenue Forecasts
 - Operational Analysis
 - Station and Access Analysis
 - Conceptual Engineering and Capital Programming
 - O&M Costs and Capital Replacement Forecasts
 - Public Benefits Analysis



FRA CIDP Step 3

- Preliminary Design and Engineering (30%)
 - Track
 - Tunnels
 - Stations
 - Signals and PTC
- NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) documentation
 - Categorical Exclusion
 - Selected analyses still required, including air quality impacts, traffic impacts, historic resources, and others

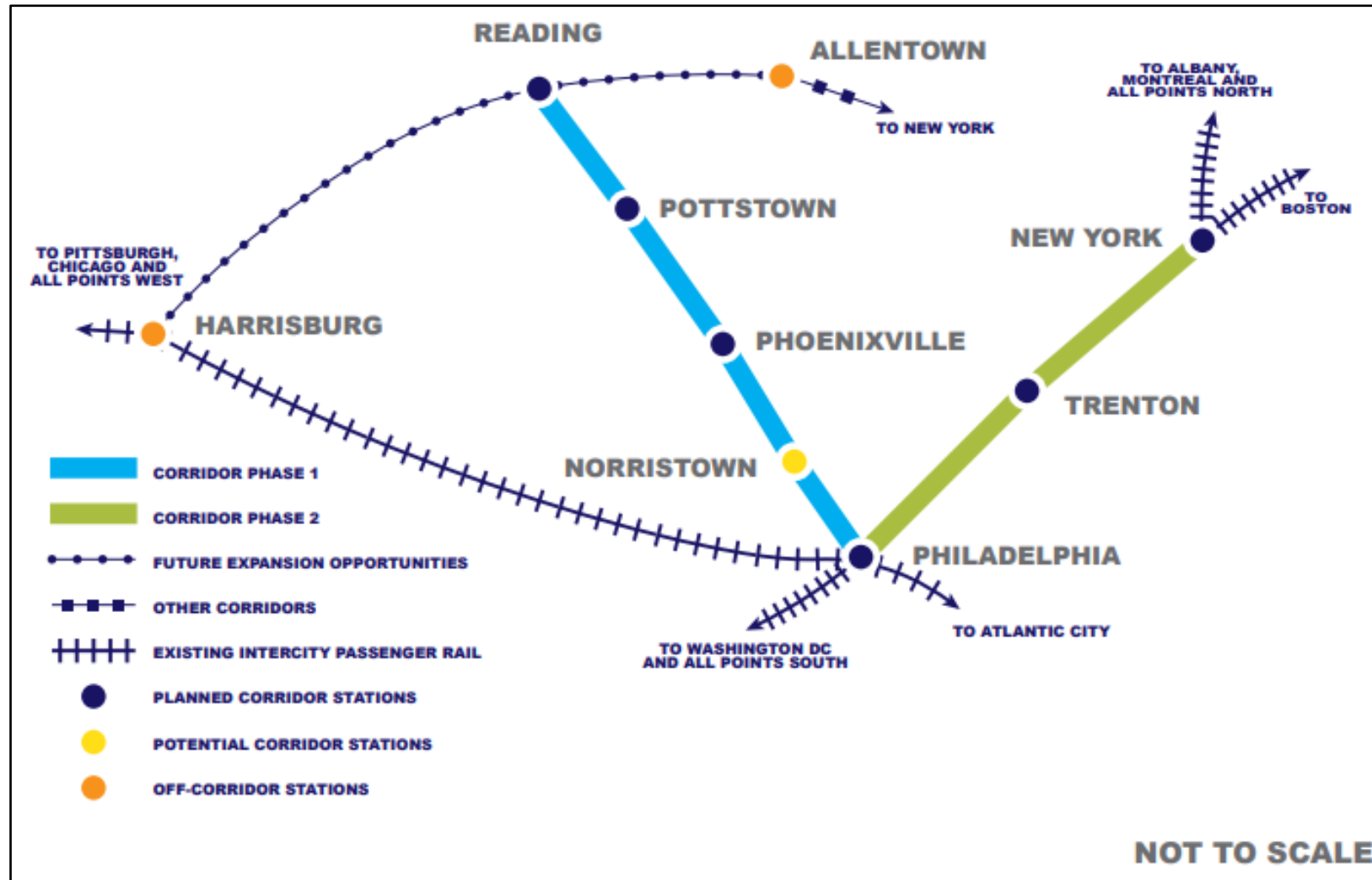


SRPRA Project Plan – A Phased Approach

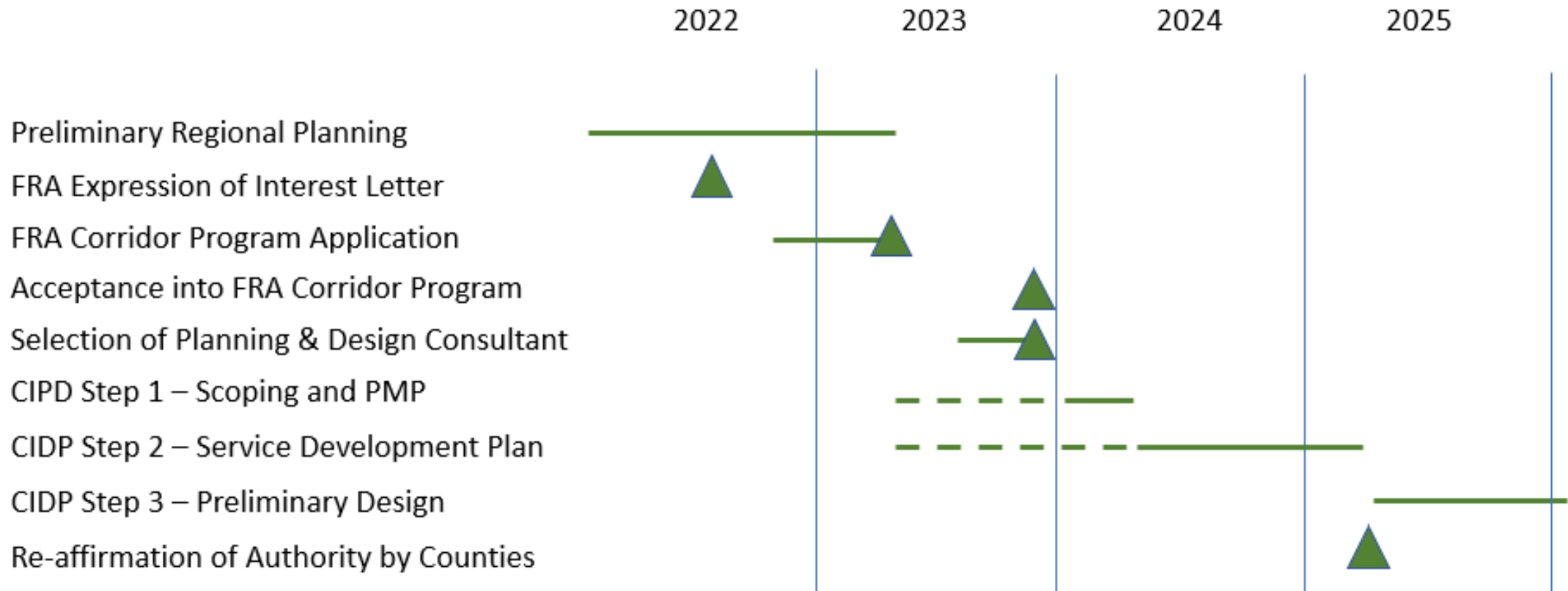
- Phase 1: Reading – Philadelphia Segment
 - Between four and six daily rail round-trips initially
 - Approximately eight or more daily rail round-trips when ridership grows
 - Integration of Amtrak Thruway Bus service to complement rail
- Phase 2: Reading – Philadelphia – New York One-Seat Ride
 - Requires completion of Gateway Projects in New York (c2035)
 - Requires delivery of new Amtrak rolling stock
- Beyond Phase 2: Long-Term Possibilities
 - Harrisburg – Connection with PennDOT Keystone/Pennsylvanian
 - Allentown – Connection Lehigh Valley and beyond



SRPRA Project Plan – A Phased Approach



SRPRA Project Plan – Phase 1 Timeline



Technical Details

- Alignment Alternatives
- Infrastructure and Systems
 - Track
 - Tunnels
 - Stations
 - Signals and PTC
- Rolling Stock



Technical Details – Alignment Alternatives

- Alternatives Analysis needed for selection of preferred alignment between Bridgeport and 30th Street Station in Philadelphia.
- Three candidate alignments identified:
 - Norfolk Southern on west side of Schuylkill River to CSX Belmont Branch to Amtrak via Zoo Interlocking;
 - SEPTA on east side of Schuylkill River to new “Reverse Swampoodle Connection” and onto Amtrak in North Philadelphia; and,
 - SEPTA on east side of Schuylkill River to Center City Commuter Connection tunnel.



Technical Details – Track

- New track will be needed to be added increase operational flexibility and capacity.
- Most of the existing track is in excellent condition. Norfolk Southern between Reading and Philadelphia is largely FRA Class IV, allowing 80 MPH maximum for passenger trains, subject to geometric limitations.
- Depending upon the alignment chosen between Bridgeport and Philadelphia, a new “Reverse Swampoodle Connection” may need to be built.
- Also depending upon alignment, the CSXT Belmont Branch could require upgrading. Amtrak and SEPTA are in excellent condition.



Technical Details – Tunnels

- Black Rock Tunnel in Phoenixville is single-track to allow modern doublestack container freight train clearances without modifying the original two-track bore. If the tunnel is determined to be an unacceptable capacity constraint, it would need to be enlarged to allow two tracks with current clearance dimensions.
- Flat Rock Tunnel in Philadelphia could also be found to be an unacceptable capacity constraint. If the NS/CSXT alignment between Bridgeport and Philadelphia is selected, this tunnel could also require enlargement.



Technical Details – Stations

- Individual communities have primary responsibility, consistent with Amtrak policy; SRPRA anticipates leading efforts related to platforms and canopies within host railroad right-of-way.
- New station facilities are needed in Reading, Pottstown and Phoenixville. If Norristown is served, the existing Norristown Transportation Center would be the station in that community.
- Station platforms are planned to be 8” above top-of-rail (TOR), to avoid interference with host freight railroad clearance requirements.
- ADA boarding would be achieved by car-borne lifts at new station facilities, and by level boarding at platforms 48” above TOR on SEPTA and Amtrak.



Technical Details – Signals and PTC

- At locations where track and special trackwork (e.g., turnouts or crossovers) are added, corresponding signal system modifications are required.
- Although most of the route, including all three alternatives between Bridgeport and Philadelphia on the initial Reading – Philadelphia Segment, are already equipped with PTC, depending upon the alignment selected, some locations might need to be equipped, such as the CSX Belmont Branch.



Technical Details – Rolling Stock

- Amtrak procuring up to 83 *Airo* trainsets from Siemens, to be manufactured in Sacramento
- Options for up to 130 additional trainsets
- Bi-Directional, with control cabs at both ends
- Variable length, with 6 cars likely to be standard length
- Diesel, electric and dual-powered propulsion modes available
- ADA compliance via car-borne lifts and level boarding at floor height station platforms.



Technical Details – Rolling Stock

- *Airo* amenities include:
 - Comfortable seating
 - Individual power outlets and USB ports
 - Onboard Wi-Fi
 - Enhanced lighting and panoramic windows
 - Larger vestibules
 - Contemporary food service experience including self-service options
 - Advanced HVAC systems
 - Touchless restroom controls



Next Steps – SRPRA and the FRA CIDP

- Finalize CIDP Grant Agreement with FRA.
- Finalize consultant agreement with AECOM.
- Initiate CIDP Step 1 – completion anticipated by May or June 2024.
- Initiate CIDP Step 2 – Targeting July 2024 with completion anticipated in early 2025.
- CIDP Step 3 currently envisioned to be completed in early 2026.



Next Steps – Priorities for 2024

- Advance through FRA CIDP Step 1 and well into Step 2
- Formalize relationships with host railroads Norfolk Southern, and either CSXT or SEPTA depending upon alignment selected
- Formalize relationship with proposed operator and host railroad Amtrak
- Advance financial planning including applications for additional federal and state funding for final design and construction
- Continue coordination with Reading, Pottstown and Phoenixville regarding station planning and design efforts



Next Steps – CIDP and Secured Other Funding

- CIDP funding will support completion of the SDP (Step 2) and Preliminary design (Step 3) but will require state and/or local match.
- Pennsylvania LSA Grant: \$250k to Montgomery County
 - No match requirement
 - Can be used as match for federal funding in CIDP Steps 2 and 3
- Congressionally Mandated Grant: \$750k to Berks County through FRA
 - No match requirement
 - Cannot be used as match for other federal funding
 - Might be used for final design and/or construction



Next Steps – Identify Future Funding

- CIDP Step 3 will require 20% matching funds
- Final Design is post-CIDP and would require additional federal funds and local matching funds, currently anticipated to be 20%.
- Potential Federal Funding Sources
 - Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program
 - Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program
 - Additional Congressionally Directed Spending
- Potential State Funding sources remain to be identified



Thank You for your Attention!



Contact Information

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

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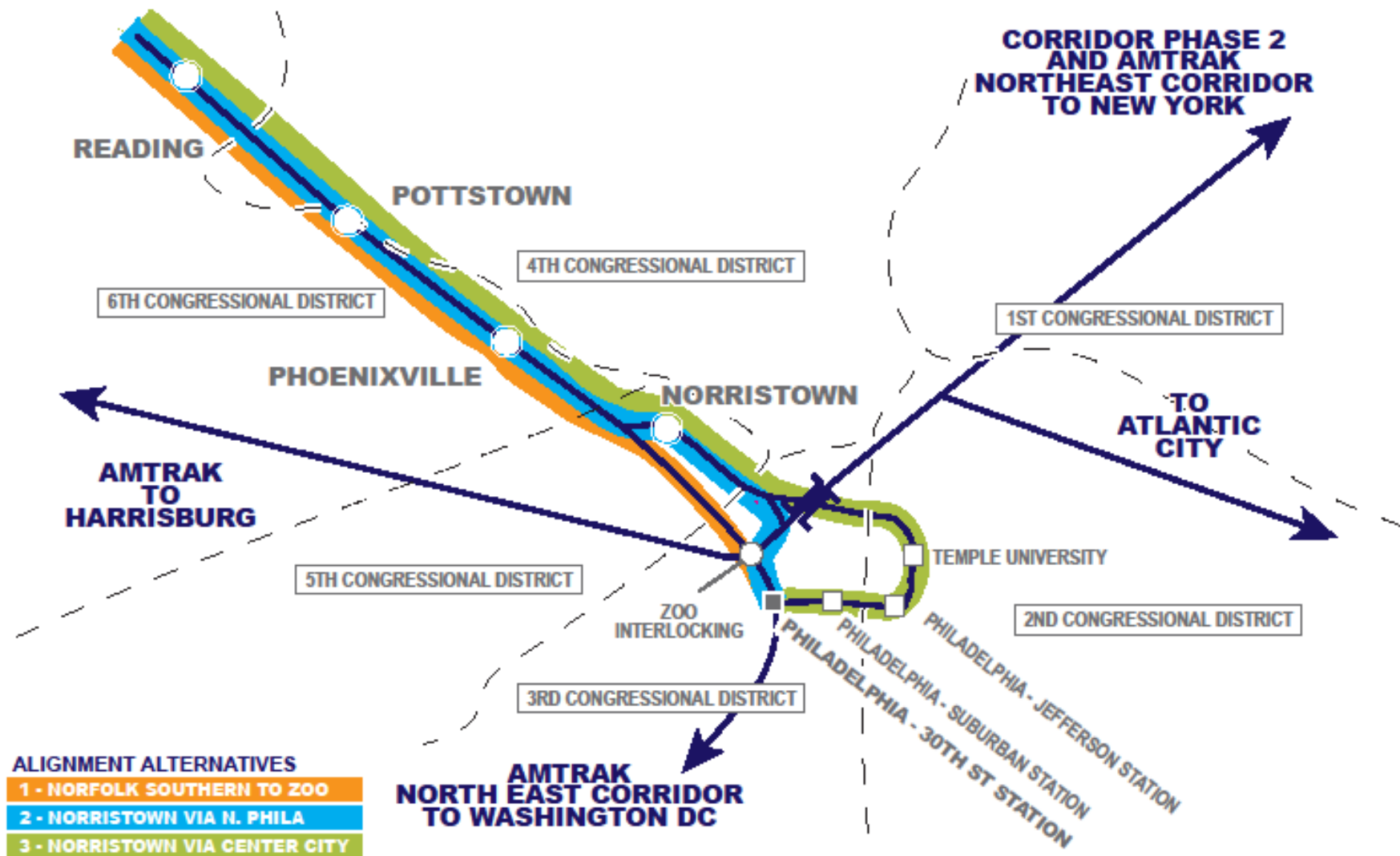
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READING - PHILADELPHIA - NEW YORK CORRIDOR PHASE 1 ALIGNMENT DETAIL (SCHEMATIC)

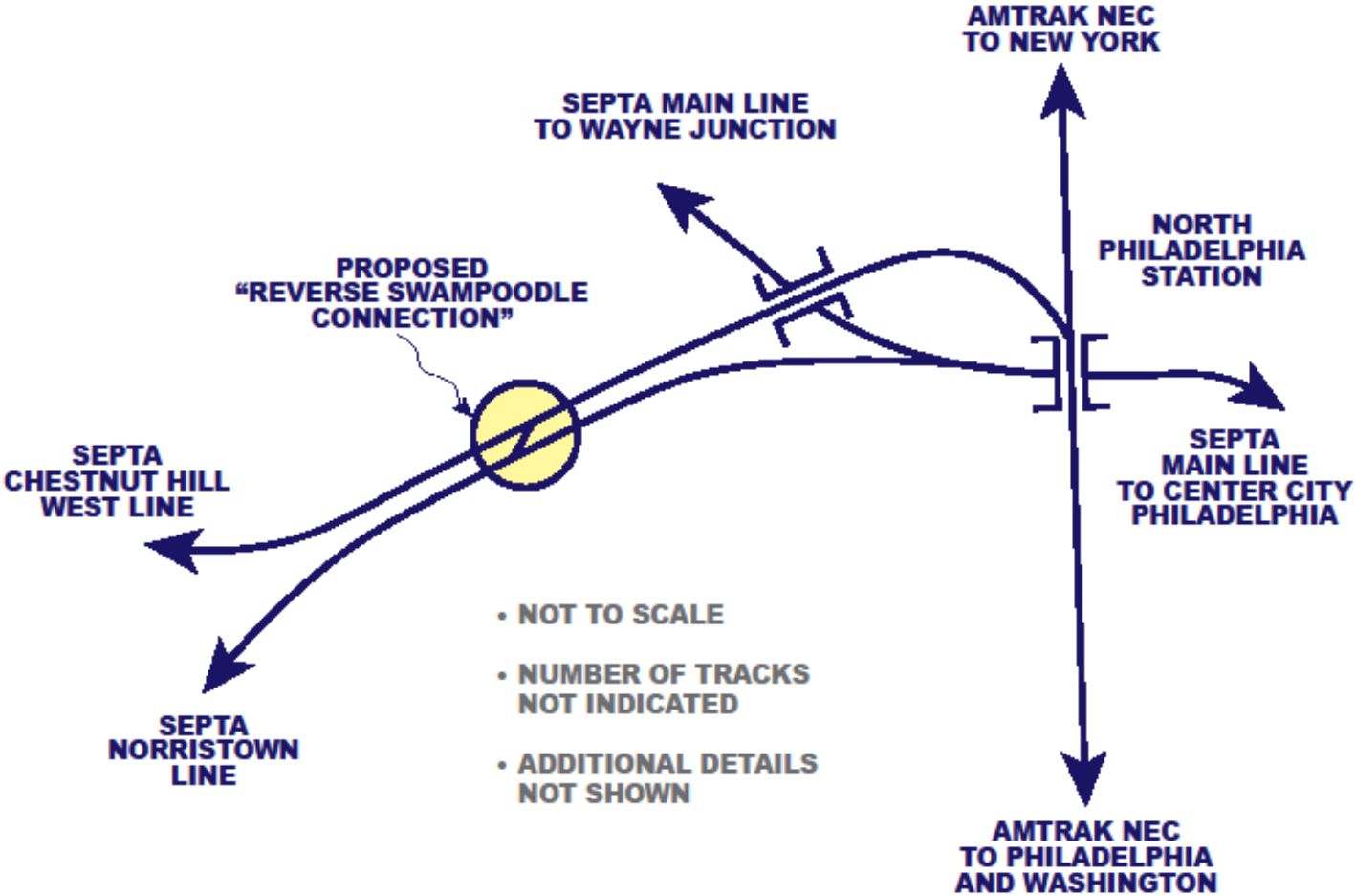


- ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES**
- 1 - NORFOLK SOUTHERN TO ZOO
 - 2 - NORRISTOWN VIA N. PHILA
 - 3 - NORRISTOWN VIA CENTER CITY

NOT TO SCALE



Reverse Swampoodle Connection



Belmont Area Alignment Details

