



SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

SRPRA

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

- Some Railroad History
- Short History of a New Agency
- Organization
- Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Program
- SRPRA Plans and Project Timeline
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- Next Steps
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Some Railroad History

- Philadelphia and Reading Rail Road chartered April 4, 1833
- Built to haul anthracite from northeast Pennsylvania to Philadelphia
- Original main line ran between Pottsville, Reading and Philadelphia
- Main line was double tracked in 1843
- In 1871 was the largest company in the world with a market capitalization of \$170 million (\$3.85 billion today)
- Reading to Harrisburg opened in 1856



Some Railroad History

- Reading Terminal opened in Philadelphia in 1893
- Construction began in 1900 of the Reading Shops, largest such facility in America at the time
- T1 Class steam locomotives built 1945-47
- Bankruptcy in 1971 in the wake of Penn Central bankruptcy
- Sold to Consolidated Rail Corporation April 1, 1976
- Most former Reading lines sold to Norfolk Southern in 1999 split of Conrail with CSX

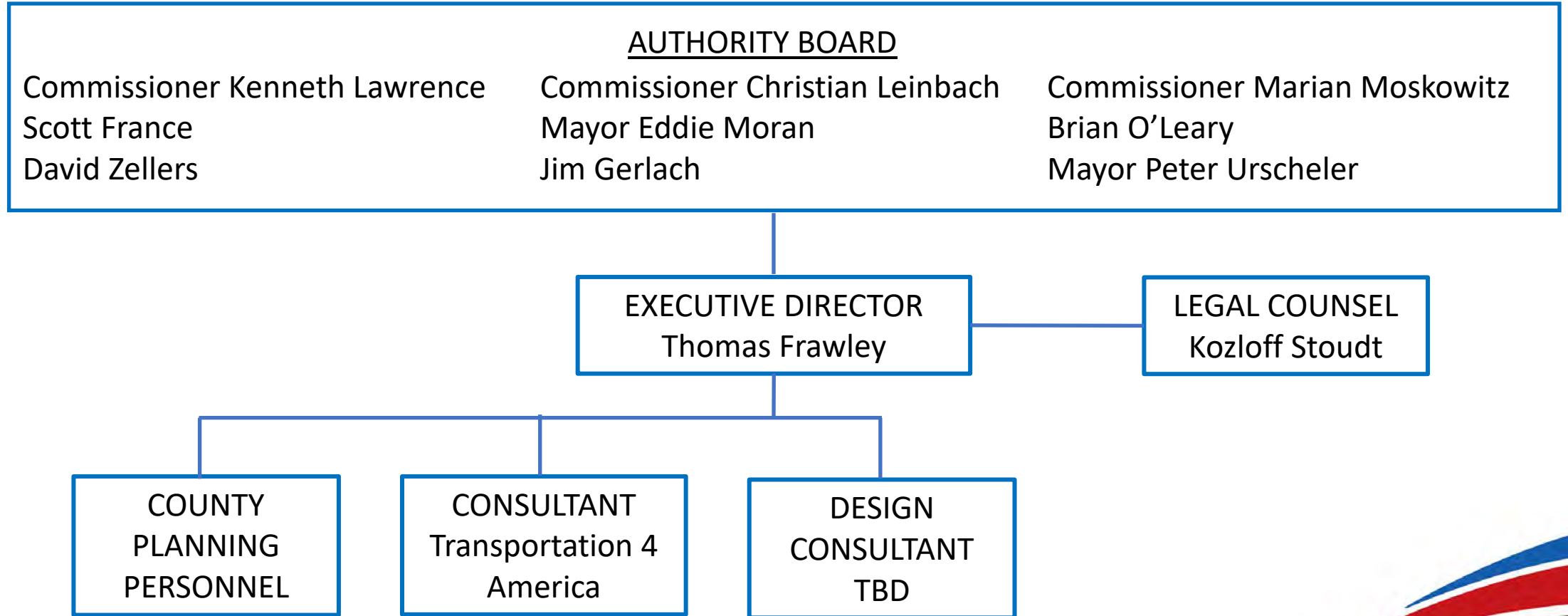


Short History of a New Agency

- Committee formed by Berks, Montgomery and Chester Counties in early 2021; County Planning Departments performed most tasks, both conceptual level planning and some administrative tasks.
- Berks County applied for EDI Community Project Funding Grant in Spring 2021 and grant approved in Fall 2021. (Grant Agreement received March 17, 2023.)
- Incorporated June 16, 2022
- Hired Executive Director in September 2022
- Engaged consultant Transportation for America (T4A) in October 2022



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 aka the Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) on November 15, 2021.
- SRPRA submitted Expression of Interest letter to FRA in July 2022.
- Notice in Federal Register December 20, 2022 inviting applications by March 20, 2023; subsequently extended to March 27.



FRA CIDP Includes 3 Steps

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

SRPRA Application Covers Steps 1 and 2

SRPRA Plans – CIDP Steps 1 and 2

- Service Development Plan (SDP) consists 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
- SDP for SRPRA will include selection of preferred alignment between Bridgeport and Philadelphia.



SRPRA Plans – CIDP Step 3

- FRA CIDP Step 3 includes:
 - Preliminary Design and Engineering
 - 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 CIDP Application - Contents

- Corridor Summary
- Corridor Funding
- Applicant Eligibility
- Detailed Corridor Description / Corridor Location
- Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- DOT Strategic Goals
- Appendices: Required Forms; Resumes; Letters of Support; Maps

Application limited to 15 Pages (not including Appendices)



SRPRA CIDP Application – Key Dates

- December 20, 2022 – Notice published in Federal Register
- February 16 – Initial draft completed. Reviewed internally and by partners PennDOT and Amtrak
- February 16 – SAM (System for Award Management) registration completed (Required for application submission via Grants.gov)
- March 20 – Application package completed; final check
- March 21 – Application submitted
- March 27 – Application deadline



SRPRA Plans – A Phased Approach

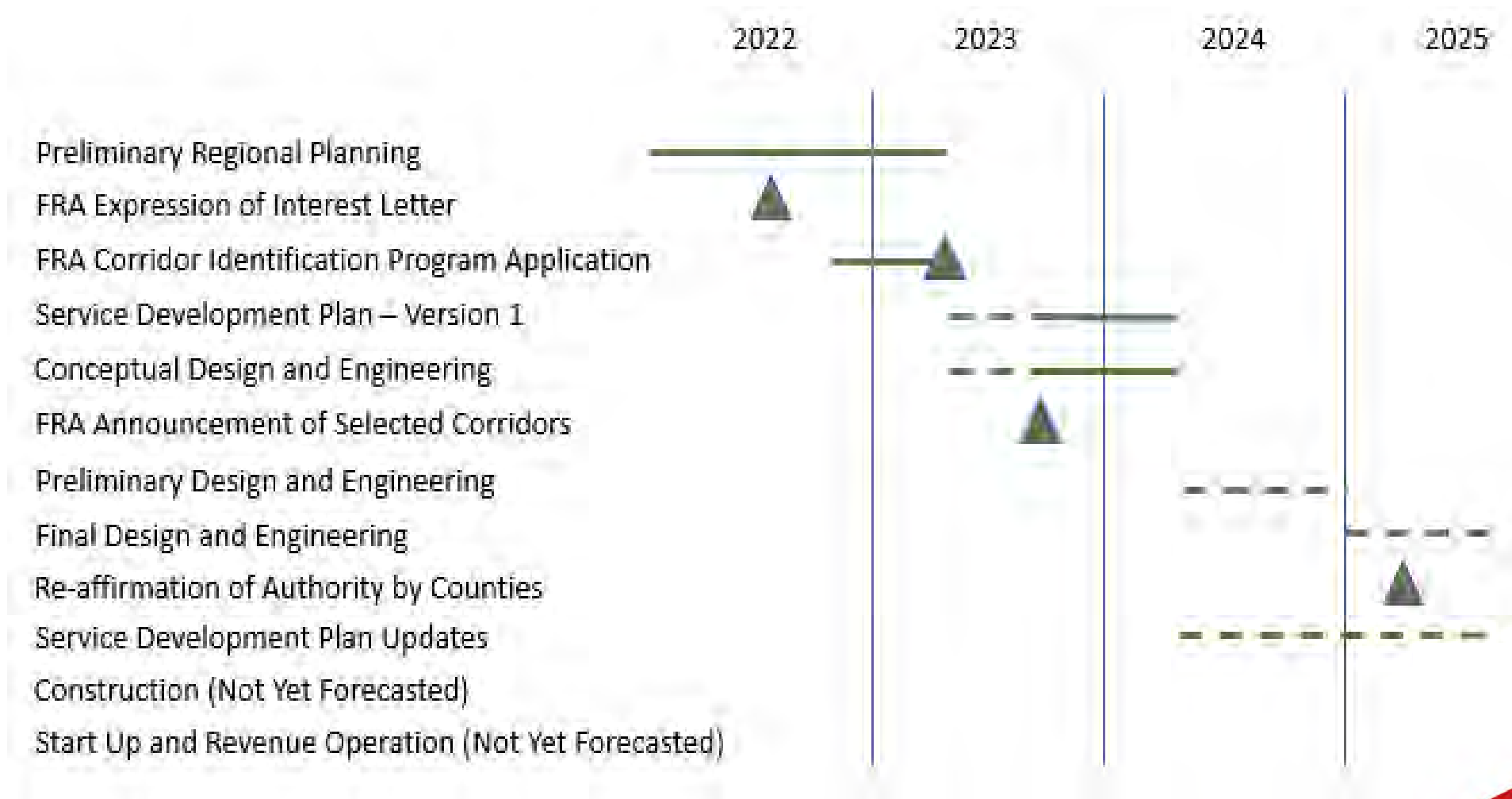
- Phase 1: Reading – Philadelphia Segment
 - Four daily rail round-trips initially
 - Approximately eight daily rail round-trips when ridership grows
 - Integration of Amtrak Thruway Bus service to complement rail
- Phase 2: Reading – Philadelphia – New York One-Seat Ride
 - Requires completion of Gateway Projects in New York (c2035)
 - Could continue beyond New York
- Beyond Phase 2: Long-Term Possibilities
 - Harrisburg - Connection with PennDOT Keystone/Pennsylvanian
 - Allentown – Connection with proposed Allentown-NY Corridor



SRPRA Plans



SRPRA Project Timeline



Technical Details

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



Technical Details – Track

- New track is anticipated to add 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 79 MPH maximum for passenger trains on Norfolk Southern subject to geometric limitations. Amtrak is excellent condition.
- 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 would require upgrading. SEPTA is in excellent condition



Technical Details – Tunnels

- Black Rock Tunnel in Phoenixville is single track to allow modern doublestack clearances without modifying the original two-track bore. If it is determined to be an unacceptable capacity constraint, it would need to be enlarged to allow two tracks with modern 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.
- New station facilities are anticipated in Reading, Pottstown and Phoenixville. If Norristown is served, the existing Norristown Transportation Center would be the station in that community.
- Station platforms will likely 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 would need to be equipped, such as the CSX Belmont Branch.



Technical Details – Rolling Stock

- Amtrak procuring up to 83 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 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

- Amenities include:

- Comfortable seating
- Individual power outlets and USB ports
- Onboard Wi-Fi
- Enhanced lighting and panoramic windows
- Larger vestibules
- A more contemporary food service experience including self-service options
- Digital seat reservation system
- Advanced HVAC systems
- Touchless restroom controls



Next Steps

- Track application submitted to Federal Railroad Administration on March 21, to participate in Corridor Identification and Development Program. (Deadline was March 27.)
- Prepare solicitation for Planning, Environmental and Engineering firm or team.
- Continue conceptual level planning to provide inputs to SDP
- Continue to build support through events like this one!
- Be accepted by FRA into the Corridor Program later this year!



Contact Information

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