### **CONTENTS:**

AGENDA

DRAFT MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 23, 2023 MEETING
PROPOSED 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE
BILLS RECEIVED SINCE OCTOBER 23, 2023 MEETING
NOVEMBER T4A MONTHLY REPORT



# **Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority**

## **Meeting Agenda**

November 27, 2023, 3pm\*

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Adoption of October 23 Minutes
- 3. Board Member Comments
- 4. Public Comment on Agenda Items
- 5. Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule Action
- 6. Committee Reports
  - a. Finance Commissioner Lawrence, Chair
    - i. Motion to Pay Bills Action
  - b. Marketing & Public Relations Brian O'Leary, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - c. Planning Scott France, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - d. Personnel Commissioner Moskowitz, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - e. Community Engagement Jim Gerlach, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - f. By-Laws Scott France, Chair
    - i. Report on revision of Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
- 7. Executive Director's Report
- 8. Other Business
- 9. General Public Comment
- 10. Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority will be held virtually at 3:00 PM on Monday, December 18, 2023. Public participation is available via the public registration link provided on the website. All SRPRA Board meetings are open to the public.

<sup>\*</sup>Public participation in SRPRA virtual meetings can be accomplished via the registration link provided on the website. Please visit the Authority website for more information and the registration link. <a href="https://www.GoSRPRA.com">www.GoSRPRA.com</a>

DRAFT MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 23, 2023 MEETING

# Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting DRAFT Minutes

October 23, 2023 3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

#### **Authority Members in Attendance:**

Christian Leinbach, Berks County Board of Commissioners, Chair
Marian Moskowitz, Chester County Commissioner, Vice Chair
Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary
Peter Urscheler, Mayor, Borough of Phoenixville, Assistant Treasurer
Brian O'Leary, Executive Director, Chester County Planning Commission
Eddie Moran, Mayor, City of Reading
Stephanie Hendrick, Mayor, Borough of Pottstown

#### **Authority Members Absent:**

Jim Gerlach, President, GRCA, Assistant Secretary

#### 1. Call to Order

Commissioner Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Dan Becker of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, read the guidelines for making public comments.

Chairman Leinbach welcomed Mayor Stephanie Hendrick of Pottstown to the SRPRA Board, and commented on the benefit of having Board membership include the mayors of all three communities in which initial stations are envisioned. Commissioner Lawrence also welcomed Mayor Hendrick to the SRPRA Board.

#### 2. Adoption of September 18, 2023 Minutes

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes.

As there were no corrections or objections to the draft minutes of the September 18, 2023 SRPRA meeting submitted, the minutes were approved.

#### 3. **Board Member Comments**

There were no Board member comments.

#### 4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

#### 5. <u>Presentation – Justin M. Keller, Pottstown Borough Manager</u>

Justin Keller, Borough Manager for Pottstown provided a presentation that described the Borough's redevelopment efforts to-date, as well as future plans, highlighting how the restoration of passenger rail could complement redevelopment in the Borough.

#### 6. <u>Transportation for America (T4A) Contract Renewal – Action</u>

Executive Director, Tom Frawley reported that the current contract with T4A expires on October 27, recognized that the level of activity varied significantly from month to month, but that the activity level was anticipated to increase after SRPRA acceptance into the FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP) as grant opportunities on the horizon in early 2024 would need to be pursued to fund final design and other related activities after completion of the CIDP work. Tom noted that the monthly rate would increase from \$3,500 to \$3,920. He also indicated that the contract includes a provision for termination for convenience with ten days' notice, and recommended, given the flexibility to terminate if conditions change, that the Board exercise its option to renew the contract.

Mayor Peter Urscheler introduced a motion to exercise the option for one year with T4A, Mayor Moran seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### 7. Committee Reports

#### a. Finance – Commissioner Kenneth Lawrence Jr., Chair

i. Motion to Pay Bills – Action

Commissioner Lawrence said there were three bills presented for payment, subject to the Board's approval.

Commissioner Lawrence motioned, Mayor Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of three bills presented in the SRPRA's October 23, 2023 Board meeting packet.

#### b. Marketing & Public Relations- Brian O'Leary, Chair

i. Committee Update

Brian O'Leary reported that the Committee met on October 4th. The Committee continues to advance its social media outreach efforts with frequent posts by social media consultant Virtual Farm. Updates to the website are also being made frequently to reflect Authority activities and news, and an update will be made shortly to reflect release of the RFP for consultant services related to preparing SRPRA's Service Development Plan.

#### c. Planning – Scott France, Chair

i. Committee Update

Scott France reported that the Planning Committee met with Norfolk Southern on September 26 to initiate a new conversation in the context of the FRA funded study that SRPRA plans to begin shortly. SRPRA promised to share the RFP when it is released and to keep NS updated regarding other developments. Scott also noted that the Committee met on October 9<sup>th</sup> and that a meeting was held with FRA on October 18 to finalize the required attachments to the \$750,000 grant agreement that will support preparation of the initial elements of the Service Development Plan. Lastly, a briefing was provided on October 19 to SRPRA's newest Board member, Mayor Stephanie Hendrick of Pottstown.

#### d. Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair

i. Committee Update

Commissioner Moskowitz, Chair, said that the Committee had no news to report.

#### e. Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair

i. Committee Update

In Jim Gerlach's absence, Chairman Leinbach state that there would be no Committee update.

#### f. By-Laws – Scott France, Chair

i. Resolution to Amend Articles of Incorporation – Action

On behalf of the Bylaws Committee, Scott France explained that the committee was formed a few months ago to examine the SRPRA's bylaws and article of incorporation established in June, 2022. Proposed edits to the Articles of Incorporation can be found online at gosrpra.com. The word "owning" was added to the list of "maintaining, funding and operating" relating to the Authority's purpose in Section 3. In Part C, the original articles specified inter-county service between Berks, Chester and Montgomery. As the service is planned to reach Philadelphia and potentially beyond, the language was edited to reflect this consideration. The word "leasing" was added to the list of "land, acquisition and management, bonding". To bring it more in line with the Municipal Authorities Act, it is proposed to mention inaugural Board members and terms of office, and address the expiration of those terms after 5 years.

Scott said the process would be to put forth a resolution today for the SRPRA Board members to vote to amend the Articles of Incorporation. If passed today, each of the member counties (Berks, Chester and Montgomery) would have to pass their own resolution supporting amendment of the SRPRA Articles of Incorporation during their respective scheduled meetings held in November. At the end of November, if all preceding actions take place, the SRPRA would file by the end of November with the Commonwealth to amend the Articles of Incorporation, with a public advertisement preceding the intent to file.

Christian Leinbach urged representatives of Berks, Chester and Montgomery Counties that if the resolution passes, the documents needs to be passed as provided and without substantive change in all 3 counties. Any additional refinements in the proposed changes in the Bylaws must be submitted to Scott France in the next 2 to 3 days.

Scott France motioned, and Brian O'Leary seconded, all voted unanimously, to adopt the resolution to amend the SRPRA's Articles of Incorporation.

#### ii. Proposed Bylaw Recommendations

Scott France explained that current Bylaws just require that members be given written notice of proposed amendments 30 days prior to voting on the amendments. The amendments proposed will be available for adoption via motion at the November 27th SRPRA Board meeting. He summarized the most significant changes, including: modifying the purpose to be consistent with the proposed amendment to the Articles of Incorporation; Board member terms/vacancy procedures; meeting details updated; payment authorization made consistent with practice allowing ratification of routine payments after the fact as authorized by previous resolution. He added that a written summary was prepared and enclosed in the Board's meeting packet, and that the Board will reconvene at next month's meeting on November 27th to decide whether to adopt the changes.

#### 8. Executive Director's Report

Tom Frawley, Executive Director, announced that on behalf of the SRPRA, he will pursue the consultant RFP, tentatively to be released on Wednesday, October 25th and announced both on the website and via a link to the website that will be advertised on other channels.

Tom reminded attendees that Montgomery County Commissioner Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., SRPRA Board Member and Treasurer, will be resigning at the end of the year, and that we will be sorry to see him go. On behalf of the Board, Tom presented a plaque to Commissioner Lawrence in

recognition of his service as an initial Board Member of the SRPRA. Additionally, Tom made a presentation of a plaque to former Congressman and current SRPRA Board member, Jim Gerlach in recognition for his work in obtaining funding for Montgomery County Community College and his service as an initial member of the SRPRA. As Jim Gerlach was unable to attend, the award was accepted by Katie Hetherington Cunfer of the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance on Jim's behalf. Tom said he hoped both Commissioner Lawrence and Jim Gerlach would join the Board on the SRPRA train in the future.

Commissioner Lawrence thanked the Board and acknowledged Councilwoman Trenita Lindsay and State Representative Paul Friel who were in attendance.

Christian Leinbach shared his appreciation for the leadership of both Commissioner Lawrence and Jim Gerlach and stated that both were part of the pre-Authority committee, and were critical to the process of the creation of the SRPRA, and that he hoped they would attend the ribbon-cutting for the first passenger train on the corridor.

#### 9. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

#### **10.** General Public Comment

Deb Spence asked three questions relating to Pottstown. Christian Leinbach redirected her to the Borough of Pottstown, as the questions dealt with matters outside of SRPRA's responsibilities, adding that today's meeting is focused solely on SRPRA and passenger rail issues.

On behalf of Pottstown residents, Borough Council President Dan Weand thanked the Board for its work and asked if all goes as planned, when can Pottstown expect passenger rail?

Christian Leinbach replied that the SRPRA is committed to restoration of ridership being restored to all three counties. The next critical step is the Federal Rail Administration's decision on SRPRA's Corridor ID Program application, which is tentatively expected in November. If the application is unsuccessful, another application would have to be submitted in the next application cycle. Most importantly, though, Christian said that the monies for the Corridor Program are from the bipartisan infrastructure bill, and we don't know where the funds would come from to support another round. If the existing application is successful, we are looking at 5 to 8 years, as a lot has to happen. There are different phases and stages of the Federal Rail Administration's process. Dan Weand pledged his support on behalf of his constituents and said that if they're ever needed he would mobilize his constituent to provide support.

Christian Leinbach announced that for Board members and staff, there would be a trolley bus tour following adjournment.

#### 11. Adjourn

Christian Leinbach called to adjourn the meeting.

Peter Urscheler motioned, and Marian Moskowitz seconded, all voted unanimously, to adjourn the October 2023 meeting of the SRPRA Board.

### **Next Board Meeting**

November 27, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Meehan

PROPOSED 2024 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE



## **PROPOSED BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2023**

ASSUMES 4<sup>TH</sup> MONDAY OF EACH MONTH EXCEPT AS NOTED ALL MEETINGS AT 3:00 PM AND HELD VIRTUALLY EXCEPT AS NOTED

DATE	NOTES
January 22	
February 26	
March 25	
April 15	In-Person in Phoenixville; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday due to Passover
May 20	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday due to Memorial Day
June 24	
July 22	
August 26	
September 23	
October 28	In-Person in Reading
November 25	
December 23	

**BILLS RECEIVED SINCE OCTOBER 23 MEETING** 



# **INVOICE**

1152 15th Street NW, Ste 450 Washington, DC 20005 Telephone: 202-955-5543 Fax: 202-955-5543

Federal EIN: 27-0038938

11/15/2023 DATE: INVOICE #

FOR: SRPRA Rail consulting services PROJECT NO. 1061
ACCOUNT CODE: 4100

**BILL TO:** Schuykill River Passenger Rail Authority Attn: Thomas E. Frawley

633 Court Street Reading, PA 19601 tom@frawleyconsulting.com

**Billing Period Start:** Billing Period End 10/1/2023 10/31/2023

**DUE DATE:** 12/15/2023

DESCRIPTION			AMOUNT	
Primary Services Tasks (October 1, 2023 - October 31, 2023)		\$	3,500.00	
Please reference the ab	ove-mentioned invoice number on you	r payment.		
		SUBTOTAL	\$	3,500.00
ABA#	065000090	TAX RATE		0.00%
Beneficiary Acct #	3316957006	SALES TAX		-
Beneficiary:	Smart Growth America	OTHER		-
		TOTAL	\$	3,500.00

ALERT! OUR BANK INFORMATION HAS CHANGED! PLEASE REMIT PAYMENT USING THE UPDATED BANK DETAILS PROVIDED ABOVE. THANK YOU.

Updated - September 15, 2023



# **Invoice**

Date	Invoice No.
10/25/2023	14563

SRPRA Thomas Freawley

Terms	
Net 30	

Description	Amount
ANNUAL MARKETING PARTNERSHIP: November 2023	2,500.00
Refer to proposal for defined plan elements and reactionary marketing consultation (start date 7/2023 - 12/2023)	
Billed monthly \$2500.00 Sales Tax	0.00

**Total** \$2,500.00

FROM: THOMAS E FRAWLEY CONSULTING, LLC

551 Daventry Road Berwyn, PA 19312-1740 Attention: Thomas E. Frawley Thomas E. Frawley Contact Information: Tom@FrawleyConsulting.com

610-724-5028 (Mobile)

TO: SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

**Berks County Courthouse and Government Services Center** 

633 Court Street Reading, PA 19601

**Attention: Finance Committee** 

Sequential Payment Request Number: 14

Contract Date: 20SEP2022 Invoice Number: 2023-10 Start Date: 26SEP2022 Invoice Date: 02NOV2023

Invoice for services performed as Executive Director of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority for the period: Sunday, October 1, 2023 through Tuesday, Octomber 31, 2023.

LABOR, INCLUDING OVERHEAD AND FEE			
ELEMENT DESCRIPTION	TASK HOUR	CONTRACT	TOTAL LABOR CHARGES
October 2023	102.50	\$130.00	\$13,325.00
		•	\$13,325.00

EXPENSES, AT COST			
DESCRIPTON OF EXPENSES		NOTES	EXPENSES
DESCRIPTON OF EXPENSES		NOTES	INVOICED
Personal auto; travel expenses		\$213.31	

TOTAL CHARGES THIS INVOICE - LABOR AND EXPENSES	
	\$13,538.31

INVOICE LABOR, EXPENSES, AND HOURS SUMMARY AND STATU	JS		
	LABOR	EXPENSES	TOTAL
CHARGED PRIOR TO 01OCT2023	\$106,046.50	\$1,528.74	\$107,575.24
CHARGED DURING 01OCT2023 - 31OCT2023	\$13,325.00	\$213.31	\$13,538.31
OVERALL CHARGED TO DATE	\$119,371.50	\$1,742.05	\$121,113.55
PREVIOUS INVOICES OUTSTANDING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL INVOICES OUTSTANDING INCLUDING THIS INVOICE	\$13,325.00	\$213.31	\$13,538.31

	HOURS
HOURS EXPENDED PRIOR TO 010CT2023	1,017.65
TOTAL HOURS CHARGED DURING 01OCT2023 - 31OCT2023	102.50
TOTAL HOURS CHARGED 01SEP2022 THROUGH 31OCT2023	1,120.15

I have personally examined this billing statement. All entries are correct and reasonable for the services performed and allowable costs incurred, and no item on this statement has been previously billed.

Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq. - Principal DATE

Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq., MBA - Executive Director Hours - Sunday 01OCT2023 through Tuesday 31OCT2023

Invoice Number: 2023-10 Invoice Date: 02NOV2023

DAY	DATE		DESCRIPTION OF PRIMARY ACTIVITIES PERFORMED (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ATTACHED MONTHLY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT)
Sunday	1	0.00	
Monday	2	0.00	
Tuesday	3	2.75	Advance draft consultant RFP and attachments
Wednesday	4	5.00	Marketing & Public Relations Cmte meeting; Berks stakeholder meeting
Thursday	5	2.00	FRA grant agreement materials
Friday	6	0.00	
Saturday	7	0.00	
Sunday	8	2.00	FRA grant agreement materials
Monday	9	3.50	Planning Committee meeting; draft RFP forms
Tuesday	10	4.00	FSWG meeting; advance draft consultant RFP and attachments
Wednesday	11	2.50	FRA grant agreement materials
Thursday	12	3.50	T4A meeting; advance draft consultant RFP
Friday	13	0.00	
Saturday	14	2.00	FRA grant agreement materials
Sunday	15	5.00	Consultant RFP
Monday	16	4.50	Executive Cmte report; Finance Cmte report; advance consultant RFP
Tuesday	17	6.00	Executive Committee meeting; moderate PEDA Conference panel
Wednesday	18	2.50	FRA Coordination Meeting; Finance Committee meeting
Thursday	19	3.75	Pottstown Mayor briefing; Technical Cmte meeting; Board meeting prep
Friday	20	4.00	Board meeting prep; FRA grant agreement materials
Saturday	21	0.00	
Sunday	22	3.00	
Monday	23	8.00	Board meeting, including prep
Tuesday	24	8.00	Consultant RFP and attachments
Wednesday	25	9.00	Pottstown Planning Committee meeting; consultant RFP and attachments
Thursday	26	6.50	Berks Procurement meeting; RFP attachments
Friday	27	8.00	Complete and post consultant RFP
Saturday	28	0.00	
Sunday	29	0.00	
Monday	30	4.50	RFP release follow-up
Tuesday	31	2.50	Begin proposal evaluation manual

Task Totals:	102.50
	-

Certified: Date: 02-NOV-2023

Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq. - Prinicpal

Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq., MBA - Executive Director Expenses - Sunay 01OCT2023 through Tuesday 31OCT2023

Invoice Number: 2023-10 Invoice Date: 02NOV2023

#### **EXPENSES THIS INVOICE**

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	NOTES
4-Oct-23	Personal Auto: Berwyn-Reading RT	\$56.33	86 miles at \$0.655
4-Oct-23	Doubletree by Hilton, Reading	\$29.91	Travel Meal
17-Oct-23	Personal Auto: Berwyn-Reading RT	\$56.33	86 miles at \$0.655
23-Oct-23	Personal Auto: Berwyn-Pottstown RT	\$35.37	54 miles at \$0.655
25-Oct-23	Personal Auto: Berwyn-Pottstown RT	\$35.37	54 miles at \$0.655
-			

Date: 02-NOV-2023

Task 1 Total:	\$213.31

Certified:

Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq. - Prinicpal

TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4A)

NOVEMBER 2023 MONTHLY REPORT



# Oct/Nov 2023 Report to the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

### **House Speaker Confirmed**

The House elected Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA-04) Speaker of the House by a vote of 220-209 on October 25th, 2023. The election comes after 21 days without a speaker, resulting in a currently tense environment on the hill. You can read more about Rep. Mike Johnson here.

## **FY 2024 Appropriations Update**

With the election of Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA-04) as Speaker, the House is back in business and is looking to move forward with the FY24 House THUD Appropriations Bill. The new Speaker released the following schedule for the House of Representatives after his election:

- Week of October 23: Energy and Water (passed in House)
- Week of October 30: Legislative Branch, Interior and Environment, Transportation Housing and Urban Development
- Week of November 6: Financial Services and General Government, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Week of November 13: Labor/Health Human Services, Agriculture

One week into Rep. Mike Johnson's speakership, the House of Representatives were forced to stall the THUD funding bill and postpone voting, primarily due to disagreements over approximately \$1.5 billion in cuts to Amtrak funding. House Republicans, especially those representing districts served by the Northeast Corridor (NEC), have expressed opposition to the bill. Around 8 to 10 GOP lawmakers are resisting the proposed cuts, concerned about potential disruptions to NEC service, while another faction within the GOP is advocating for even more substantial reductions to funding for the rail company. President Biden, as well as House Democrats, have criticized the deep cuts to transportation.

On October 24th, 2023, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that the bill is ready to proceed with voting after being passed unanimously by the Committee. Among those amendments passed, several pertained to passenger rail funding including:

Amendment #	Sponsor	Amendment Scope
1111	Mike Lee (UT)	This amendment adds text directing Federal Railroad Administration to expedite approval of Uinta Basin Railway, offering a template to expedite STB decisions
1240	Corey A. Booker (NJ)	This amendment increases Federal-State partnership for intercity passenger rail from \$100 million to \$1.5 billion
1274	Chris Van Hollen (MD)	This amendment allocates \$5 million for expenses associated with Union Station (DC) Redevelopment



	Chris Van Hollen (MD)	This amendment allocates \$15 million to rehabilitate and repair Union Station (DC)
--	--------------------------	---

On November 1st, 2023, the <u>U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations</u> announced that the U.S. Senate had passed FY24 THUD appropriations by a vote of 82-15, alongside two other spending bills. The bill is likely to culminate in a vote soon, but as of this report, uncertainty looms over its passage due to the divides within the GOP that are leaving the fate of the THUD bill in limbo.

## Shutdown averted...again

The House approved a <u>short-term spending bill</u> on November 14th, 2023 in a 336-95 vote. The stopgap measure is now awaiting Senate approval and presidential signature before Saturday to avert another government shutdown. The plan extends federal funding at current levels, establishing a January 19, 2024 deadline for certain programs and agencies (including Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations), and a February 2, 2024 deadline for the remainder of the appropriation bills.

## Federal Funding match flexibility for Amtrak

Senator Peter Welch (D-VT) is looking to introduce <u>legislation</u> in the coming weeks that helps Amtrak leverage federal funding it receives to be used as a non-federal match for discretionary grants. The proposed legislation, pending a bipartisan cosponsor, looks to allow Amtrak flexibility across its entire network to use its dedicated federal funds it receives (\$41.2 billion authorized in IIJA) as a non-federal match for discretionary grant programs, so as long as projects pursued advance intercity passenger rail mobility. As it currently stands, IIJA provided Amtrak flexibility envisioned in this bill solely for the NEC. The status quo has disadvantaged the National Network and overall growth of passenger rail service with Amtrak as a partner. If enacted, the legislation will allow Amtrak to be a willing and nimble partner with states and communities across the United States to pursue discretionary grant funding that adds and improves passenger rail infrastructure.

### Amtrak Board Nominees Advance to the Senate Floor

On October 18th, 2023, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation advanced three Amtrak board nominees - Anthony Coscia, Christopher Koos and Joel Szabat. The advancement of these nominees comes after a deadlock which caused board members to serve past their terms' expiration. The hold originally came from Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), who voiced concerns that the nominees did not meet a legislative requirement that Amtrak board members be geographically representative. Out of the six original nominees, only Christopher Koos was from outside of the Northeast Corridor region.

The White House agreed to remove one of the six original nominees and replace the nominee with one hailing from the Western U.S.. Senator Jerry Moran, (R-KS), and Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), have stated that he will continue to block the approval if Biden's new nominee does not follow through on increasing geographic representation. No word yet on who will be removed



from nomination or who will replace them. It is expected that other Senators will block approval if the White House fails to increase geographic diversity.

## FRA awards \$16.4 billion for passenger rail projects along the NEC

On November 6th, 2023, the <u>Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)</u> awarded \$16.4 billion for 25 passenger rail projects along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Passenger rail projects were selected through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (Fed-State NEC). Projects that are moving forward with new funding include the Gateway Program in New Jersey/New York and the replacement of the Connecticut River Bridge. These investments would see upgrades in infrastructure such as tracks, power systems, signals, and stations, enabling more reliable and efficient rail service for riders.

This announcement represents a commitment to delivering on investments in improved passenger rail service and strengthening connectivity in essential rail corridors. We bring this to your attention to underscore how these investments will improve connectivity for riders from Reading, Pottstown, and Phoenixville once their corridor is developed and linked to the NEC.

# **Upcoming Funding Opportunities**

## **FY23 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program**

In November, 2023, the <u>Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)</u> will announce the availability of \$573 million in competitive, discretionary funding for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods. FRA will host a webinar following the NOFO release to provide a program overview for potential grantees.

# FY22-23 Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program

In November, 2023, the <u>FRA</u> will also announce the availability of \$104 million in competitive, discretionary funding for operating assistance grants for initiating, restoring, or enhancing intercity passenger rail transportation. FRA will host a webinar following the NOFO release to provide a program overview for potential grantees.

For questions or more information, please contact John Robert Smith at <u>irsmith@t4america.org</u> or 601-527-5040.