



Report for the
Southern Rail Commission on
**Potential Gulf Coast Service
Restoration Options**



December 2015





On the cover

**Top: The Amtrak® *Sunset Limited*® crossing Escambia Bay, circa 1994.
Bottom: Amtrak P-42 locomotive and Horizon coaches and Club Dinette cars in
state-supported service.**

Amtrak, Sunset Limited, City of New Orleans, Silver Meteor, Silver Service, Empire Builder, California Zephyr, Southwest Chief, Lincoln Service, Blue Water, Pere Marquette, Wolverine Service, Hiawatha Service, Capitol Limited, Lake Shore Limited, Cardinal and Hoosier State are registered service marks of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In mid-2015, the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) commissioned Amtrak to evaluate potential service restoration options along the Gulf Coast. The purpose of this report is to determine the operating characteristics of potential service options and forecast performance so that the SRC can identify the service plan which would best serve the region. The chosen alternative would then provide a basis for any program of community outreach, study of necessary infrastructure improvements or implementation of necessary funding mechanisms to follow.

Amtrak launched its Gulf Coast service with the *Gulf Coast Limited*, a train that operated between Mobile and New Orleans during the 1984 World's Fair, and again in 1996-1997. From 1993 through 2005 Amtrak also operated an extension of the *Sunset Limited* through the region, as part of a transcontinental Los Angeles-Florida run, but for various reasons (including the route length and carrier operating conditions), successful on-time performance proved to be elusive, hindering the train's ridership and hence its financial performance. Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, service has been suspended east of New Orleans.

The Gulf Coast region is home to numerous regional, national and global tourist destinations and events, including New Orleans' Mardi Gras, the theme parks of central Florida, Gulf Coast beaches and casino gaming/resorts. Major league sports teams, NCAA bowl games, three cruise terminals with weekly mass-market cruise ship departures and convention opportunities also draw visitors to communities in the region, while military bases and major defense contractor facilities bring business and military travelers. Reintroduction of rail passenger service to this market presents numerous marketing opportunities and Amtrak has the marketing capability to assist in promoting any service which is implemented.

Given these factors and opportunities, Amtrak has identified a range of feasible service options and produced an analysis of ridership levels, projected revenues, and associated costs. While infrastructure capital costs are not included in this evaluation, these service options provide a starting point for a detailed analysis of the capital needs associated with each option.

Of the five evaluated alternatives and sub-alternatives, Amtrak identified **Alternatives A/A1** as providing the best balance of operating costs and ridership benefits:

- **Alternatives A and A1**: Extend a portion of the *City of New Orleans* consist from New Orleans to Orlando, with (**Alternative A**) or without (**Alternative A1**) a single daily state-supported train, priced under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, Section 209 methodology (PRIIA 209) between New Orleans and Mobile.
 - o **Alternative A** would generate annual ridership of 153,900 passengers and would require an annual operating (and PRIIA 209 Equipment Capital) funding commitment of \$9.49 million. This alternative provided the **highest total ridership** of any analyzed alternative.
 - o **Alternative A1** would generate annual ridership of 138,300 passengers and require an annual operating funding commitment of \$5.48 million. This alternative provided the

second highest ridership of all the analyzed alternatives, but the **lowest level of identified operating need**.

In addition, Amtrak evaluated two alternate service plans:

- **Alternatives B and B1**: Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile, to be priced and funded by the state partners under the PRIIA 209 methodology without (**Alternative B**) or with (**Alternative B1**) a Thruway bus connection from Mobile to Amtrak service at Jacksonville.
 - o **Alternative B** would generate annual ridership of 38,400 passengers and would require an annual PRIIA 209 operating and equipment capital funding commitment of \$6.97 million.
 - o **Alternative B1** would generate annual ridership of 43,400 passengers and would require an annual PRIIA 209 operating and equipment capital funding commitment of \$8.26 million.
- **Alternative C**: One daily long distance round trip between New Orleans and Orlando. This alternative would generate annual ridership of 69,100 passengers and would require an annual operating funding commitment of \$14.4 million.

Alternatives A and A1 yield superior ridership demand and cost efficiency over **Alternatives B and B1** and **C** due to the availability of daily “one-seat ride” service between the Gulf Coast stations and points on the current *City of New Orleans* route, eliminating the need to change trains in New Orleans for travel between the current *City of New Orleans* route and Gulf Coast points. Since the number of passengers who are willing to make a single connection is greater than those willing to make two connections to continue a trip, ridership also increases on additional Amtrak services which connect to both the future Gulf route as well as the existing *City of New Orleans*. Cost efficiencies are also present, as a run-through operation requires less additional equipment than a stand-alone New Orleans-Orlando passenger train with dedicated equipment.

To proceed with any of the proposed alternatives evaluated here, Amtrak and the SRC will need to:

- Approach the host railroads (chiefly CSXT) to identify any infrastructure needs for the proposed service.
- Identify and develop operating and capital funding mechanisms to support any proposed service.
- Identify and build support from institutions which are likely to benefit from, and attract riders to, the proposed Gulf Coast service.
- Work with communities on plans to revitalize station facilities.
- Refine service proposals as a clearer picture emerges of the infrastructure environment and as marketing opportunities are developed along the route.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This report has been prepared by Amtrak in response to a request from the Southern Rail Commission for a study of possible alternatives for the return of passenger service to the Gulf Coast region. The goal of this report is to determine the potential operating characteristics and performance of different potential service scenarios, allowing the SRC to pick which service plan would benefit the region best, so that it can base community outreach, study necessary infrastructure improvements and develop necessary funding mechanisms accordingly.

History of Amtrak Service Along the Gulf Coast

Amtrak launched service along the Gulf Coast beginning in 1984 with the daily *Gulf Coast Limited* between Mobile and New Orleans, in conjunction with the Louisiana World's Fair Exposition, at the behest of the Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission (now the SRC). The states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, via legislature-approved funding, jointly supported the service as a 403(b) operation. Although the train was well patronized, Mississippi did not continue its financial support and the service was terminated in January, 1985. In March of 1993, Amtrak inaugurated the first coast-to-coast intercity passenger train by extending the long distance, tri-weekly Los Angeles-New Orleans *Sunset Limited* to Miami, Florida and points in between. The states (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida) were again called on to provide a one-time financial commitment in the form of capital infrastructure dollars. In the summer of 1996, at the request of the SRC, Amtrak restarted the *Gulf Coast Limited*, again with financial support from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. This New Orleans-Mobile service was operated in addition to the *Sunset Limited*, briefly providing multiple frequencies along the Gulf Coast until its discontinuance in March 1997. While the corridor train proved to be successful, it was lost due to the lack of consistent multi-state funding.

<i>Gulf Coast Limited</i> Ridership during 1984-85 and 1996-97 Operations			
Month	Ridership	Month	Ridership
April 1984*	505	June 1996*	24
May 1984	9,096	July 1996	3,377
June 1984	13,422	August 1996	4,951
July 1984	10,055	September 1996	4,439
August 1984	8,032	October 1996	1,358
September 1984	5,823	November 1996	8,155
October 1984	7,477	December 1996	5,622
November 1984	4,906	January 1997	1,320
December 1984	3,101	February 1997	1,213
January 1985*	1,285	March 1997*	3,658
Total	63,702	Total	34,117

* Trains did not operate for the entirety of first/last months

<i>Sunset Limited Gulf Coast and Total Ridership, FY1993-FY2005</i>		
Fiscal Year	Gulf Coast Trips*	Total Trips
1993	n/a	148,387
1994	n/a	174,927
1995	n/a	161,412
1996	n/a	144,324
1997	n/a	124,493
1998	n/a	120,691
1999	n/a	113,646
2000	53,256	114,401
2001	48,908	110,262
2002	41,178	97,366
2003	43,936	105,033
2004	37,375	96,426
2005	29,668**	81,348

Note: Gulf Coast breakout data not available prior to Fiscal Year 2000.

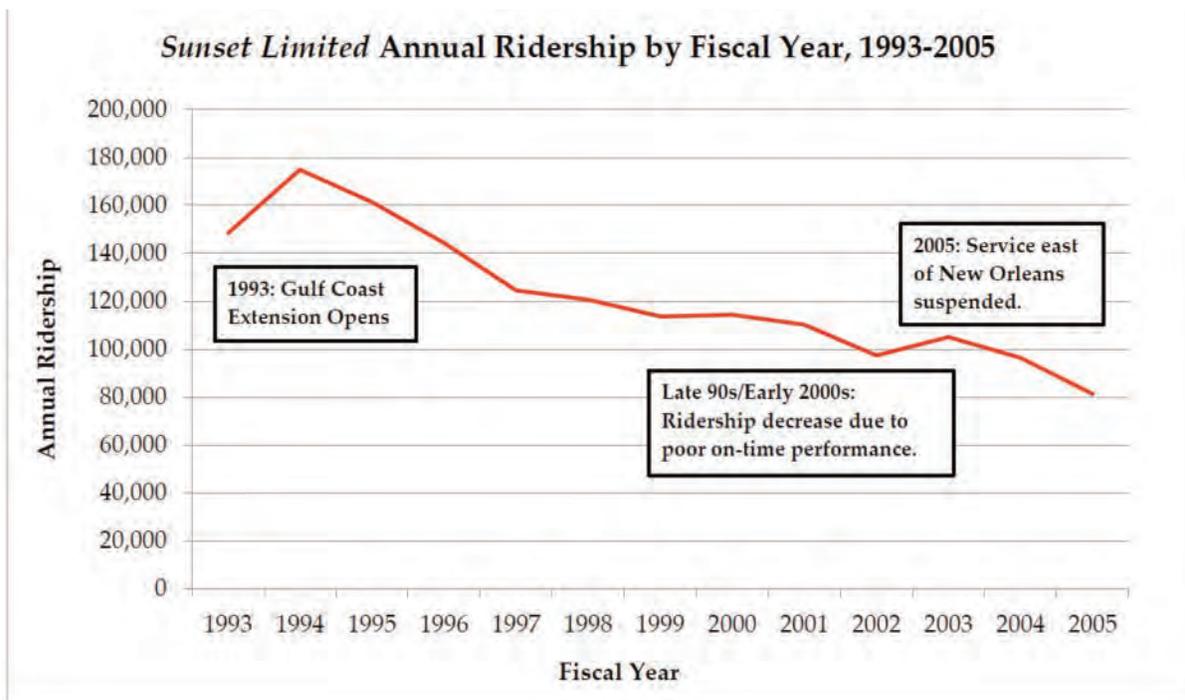
* Gulf Coast trips include trips where the origin, destination or both were east of New Orleans.

** Gulf Coast service suspended August 2005; Amtrak's Fiscal Year ended September 30.



*Inaugural run of the Sunset Limited along the Gulf Coast Gulfport, Mississippi, March 31, 1993.
Photo: Amtrak Archives courtesy Ira Silverman*

While the *Sunset Limited* was initially a success, as the years went on the train suffered from significant operating and timekeeping problems which were a product of more general operating problems experienced by the host railroads. While the host railroad operating problems were beyond Amtrak's control, the 2,764-mile length of the *Sunset Limited* route greatly magnified the impacts to service. Trains frequently ran several hours late (sometimes over 24 hours late) in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Amtrak made several adjustments in an attempt to address the delays, including adding more time to the schedule, but to no avail. By 2005, Amtrak was busing passengers east of New Orleans on nearly one third of all trips in an effort to keep the *Sunset Limited* on schedule over the rest of its route.



The *Sunset Limited* service was suspended in August of 2005, immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina making landfall along the Louisiana-Mississippi border. Due to the significant damage to the region, CSXT railroad service was also suspended. Following the restoration of the CSXT mainline in the spring of 2006, Amtrak did not restore the previous service east of New Orleans. Service has remained suspended since that time as Amtrak, the states, Federal and local governments have taken the problem of service restoration under consideration.

The Southern Rail Commission's Request

In mid-2015, the SRC commissioned Amtrak to evaluate service options along the Gulf Coast. This evaluation includes a range of service options that Amtrak believes it can reliably provide,

as well as an analysis of ridership levels, projected revenues, and associated costs. While infrastructure capital costs are not included in this evaluation, the service options provide a starting point for a detailed analysis of the capital needs associated with each option.

Amtrak developed and evaluated five alternatives and sub-alternatives. The superior alternatives from a ridership demand and/or cost effectiveness standpoint are **Alternatives A/A1**:

- **Alternative A**: Extend a portion of the *City of New Orleans*' consist through from New Orleans to Orlando, with a single state-supported train priced under PRIIA 209 between New Orleans and Mobile. This alternative was also evaluated without the state-supported service, as **Alternative A1**, which has the lowest forecast operating funding need of all evaluated alternatives. A stable, multi-year operating funding mechanism for the additional long distance service would have to be developed that is beyond the scope of PRIIA 209 state-supported pricing.

In addition, Amtrak evaluated:

- **Alternatives B/B1**: Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile, to be priced and funded by the state partners under the PRIIA 209 methodology. A Thruway bus connection from proposed service at Mobile to Amtrak service at Jacksonville was also evaluated, as **Alternative B1**.
- **Alternative C**: One daily long distance round trip between New Orleans and Orlando. A stable, multi-year funding mechanism for this service would have to be developed that is beyond the scope of PRIIA 209 state-supported pricing.

Details of the proposed operational and financial results of each alternative are described in detail in the "Evaluated Alternatives" and "Comparison of Results" sections of this report.

In June 2009, pursuant to Section 226 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, Amtrak released a report containing potential service restoration alternatives for Gulf Coast Service, including the stand-alone long distance train and *City of New Orleans* extension options. This report contains updated figures to reflect changes in market demand and operating assumptions such as a modified schedule assumption and more economical consist assumptions. Furthermore, the financial forecasts based in this evaluation reflect updated base cost data from more recent systemwide cost experience, and identifies and prices state-supported service under the PRIIA 209 methodology.

The Gulf Coast Region

The Gulf Coast region is defined for the purposes of this report as the towns, cities, metropolitan and micropolitan areas between New Orleans and Orlando which would gain service under

the alternatives proposed in this study. The region is home to numerous regional, national and global tourist destinations and events, including New Orleans' Mardi Gras, the theme parks of central Florida, the Gulf Coast beaches, and multiple casino gaming/resort destinations. Major league sports teams, NCAA bowl games, three cruise terminals with weekly mass-market cruise ship departures and conventions also draw visitors to communities in the region, while military bases and major defense contractor facilities bring business and military travelers. The tables on the following pages highlight some of the attractions and major institutional traffic generators along the proposed route, along with the population of the individual communities, as well as the aggregate totals for the region.

The geography of the Gulf Coast region and the proposed service schedules open up numerous opportunities for connectivity with other Amtrak services and modes of transportation. A long distance train terminating in Orlando would benefit from connections to existing Amtrak service to the Miami metropolitan area, Tampa and the west coast of Florida. At New Orleans, connections (or through service in [Alternatives A/A1](#)) can be offered to points north including Jackson, Memphis and Amtrak's Chicago hub for long distance and state-supported routes aboard the *City of New Orleans* train. Connections up the east coast of the United States could be facilitated through Jacksonville, while the joint Amtrak/Greyhound station facility in New Orleans could also facilitate new Thruway bus connections under Amtrak interline ticketing agreements with Greyhound. Specific connections available under each alternative are highlighted in the Alternatives section of this report.

Major Institutions and Traffic Generators, New Orleans-Orlando Gulf Coast Route

Attraction or Institution	Colleges/ Univ- ersities	Tourism, Leisure, Sports/ Entertain- ment	Govern- ment/ Defense	Conven- tions/ Group Travel or Business
New Orleans, LA				
Allstate Sugar Bowl, R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl (NCAA)		X		
Cruises: <i>Carnival Triumph</i> (2,758 berths), <i>Norwegian Dawn</i> (2,340), <i>Carnival Elation</i> (2,052)		X		
Global tourist destination		X		
HBCUs: Southern, Dillard, Xavier (Combined enrollment: 7,000)	X			
Mardi Gras, festivals, conventions, etc.		X		X
New Orleans Pelicans (NBA)		X		
New Orleans Saints (NFL)		X		
New Orleans Zephyrs (AAA Baseball)		X		
Tulane University (Enrollment: 13,000)	X			
University of New Orleans (9,000)	X			
Bay St. Louis, MS				
Festivals		X		
Casino gaming/resorts		X		
Stennis Space Center/INFINITY Science Center		X	X	
Gulfport				
Casino Gaming/Resorts		X		
NCBC Gulfport			X	
Biloxi				
Biloxi Shuckers (AA Baseball)		X		
Casino gaming/resorts		X		
Kessler Air Force Base			X	
Pascagoula				
Ingalls Shipbuilding			X	X
Mobile, AL				
Cruises: <i>Carnival Fantasy</i> (2,052 berths)		X		
GoDaddy Bowl (NCAA)		X		
Mobile BayBears (AA Baseball)				
Mardi Gras and Festivals		X		
University of Mobile and Spring Hill College (Combined enrollment: 3,000)	X			
University of South Alabama (Enrollment: 11,000)	X			
Atmore				
Casino gaming/resorts		X		
Pensacola, FL				
Pensacola Blue Wahoos (AA Baseball)		X		
Pensacola NAS			X	
University of West Florida (Enrollment: 13,000)	X			

Continued on following page

Major Institutions and Traffic Generators, New Orleans-Orlando Gulf Coast Route

Continued from previous page

Attraction or Institution	Colleges/ Univ- ersities	Tourism, Leisure, Sports/ Entertain- ment	Govern- ment/ Defense	Conven- tions/ Group Travel or Business
Crestview				
Gateway to Eglin AFB			X	
Gateway to Ft. Walton Beach/Destin		X		
Chipley				
Gateway to Baptist College of Florida	X			
Gateway to Panama City/Beaches		X		
Tallahassee				
Florida A&M University (Enrollment: 10,000)	X			
Florida State Capital			X	
Florida State University (Enrollment: 42,000)	X			
Madison				
Access to camping/campgrounds		X		
Lake City				
Osceola National Forest		X		
Jacksonville				
Access to conventions				X
Cruises: <i>Carnival Fascination</i> (2,052 berths)		X		
Gateway to beaches		X		
Jacksonville Jaguars (NFL)		X		
Jacksonville Naval Complex			X	
Jacksonville Suns (AA Baseball)		X		
TaxSlayer Bowl (NCAA)		X		
University of North Florida (Enrollment: 16,000)	X			
Palatka				
St. Johns River State College	X			
DeLand				
Gateway to East Coast beaches		X		
Stetson University (Enrollment: 3,000)	X			
Winter Park				
Access to SunRail Connecting Service				
Rollins College (Enrollment: 3,000)	X			
Orlando				
Access to conventions				X
Access to SunRail Connecting Service				
AutoNation Cure Bowl, Russell Athletic Bowl, Buffalo Wild Wings Citrus Bowl (NCAA)		X		
Gateway to Disney World, Sea World, Universal Studios		X		
Global tourist destination		X		
Major League Baseball spring training at multiple locations in the region		X		
Orlando Magic (NBA)		X		

Population and Income of Gulf Coast Region Station Communities					
Municipality	Metropolitan/Micropolitan Area	Population		Median Household	
		Town/City Proper ¹	Metro/Micro area ²	Town/City Proper	Metro/Micro area
New Orleans, LA	New Orleans-Metairie, LA Metro Area	384,320	1,209,239	\$37,146	\$47,341
Bay St. Louis, MS	None	11,388		\$44,573	
Gulfport, MS	Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula, MS Metro Area	71,750	375,259	\$37,610	\$45,479
Biloxi, MS		44,984		\$39,666	
Pascagoula, MS		22,224		\$39,363	
Mobile, AL	Mobile, AL Metro Area	194,675	413,188	\$38,644	\$43,028
Atmore, AL	None	10,006		\$24,911	
Pensacola, FL	Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL Metro Area	53,068	456,374	\$44,144	\$48,594
Crestview, FL	Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL Metro Area	22,955	242,442	\$49,124	\$52,303
Chipley, FL	None	3,605		\$31,611	
Tallahassee, FL	Tallahassee, FL Metro Area	188,107	370,777	\$39,524	\$45,516
Madison, FL	None	2,843		\$19,985	
Lake City, FL	Lake City, FL Micro Area	12,100	67,568	\$28,155	\$38,070
Jacksonville, FL	Jacksonville, FL Metro Area	853,382	1,363,610	\$47,557	\$52,258
Palatka, FL	Palatka, FL Micro Area	10,387	73,683	\$19,883	\$32,497
DeLand, FL	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL Metro Area	29,194	593,569	\$37,744	\$43,133
Winter Park, FL	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area	29,442	2,183,363	\$57,545	\$48,459
Orlando, FL		262,372		\$42,147	
Total Population		2,206,802	7,349,072		

Sources for Data: US Census Bureau, Census.gov

1. 2014 Census Estimate
2. 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
3. 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, in 2013 inflation-adjusted \$

METHODOLOGY

In order to forecast the operating results for the proposed Gulf Coast services, including forecast PRIIA 209 methodology pricing results for proposed state-supported services, Amtrak Market Research and Amtrak Finance relied on modeling processes consistent with those used for studies of other service changes throughout the Amtrak system. To obtain data on market demand, Amtrak Market Research relied on research and modeling services provided by Steer Davies Gleave (SDG), an industry leader in demand forecasting.

To ensure effective modeling of demand, SDG uses a model developed specifically for services whose frequency, operational characteristics, and levels of service were typical of the operations Amtrak has historically provided in the Gulf Coast Region. Basic demand forecasting was provided by the Long Distance Train Demand Forecasting Model, which provided the starting point for the analytical effort. The resulting demand forecasts were then fed into Amtrak's Route and Service Change Evaluation Model, along with the proposed service plan, to determine incremental costs, PRIIA 209 pricing, and the resulting profit and/or loss results.

Long Distance Train Demand Forecasting Model

The Long Distance Train Demand Forecasting Model is a reliable and well tested instrument which Amtrak uses to forecast ridership and ticket revenue on Amtrak's existing long distance train services. The model uses a direct demand approach to forecast Amtrak ridership by geographic market and class of service. Long distance customer travel surveys and actual ridership/revenue data were used to create a mathematical model which would, with the necessary inputs, provide users with forecasts of ridership, passenger mileage, and ticket revenue. The surveys included stated preference questions addressing sensitivities to changes in key characteristics of Amtrak long distance train travel. The model utilizes existing and historical ridership data, where available, to validate the baseline condition.

For a particular analysis, the long distance model is applied to all existing and new markets impacted by the proposed change(s), including markets served directly by a "one seat ride" and major markets served by connecting trains and Thruway bus services. Socio-economic data and forecasts of population, employment, and income, provided by Moody's Economy.com, are assembled for a 30-mile radius around each station area. Other key inputs to the long distance model analysis include:

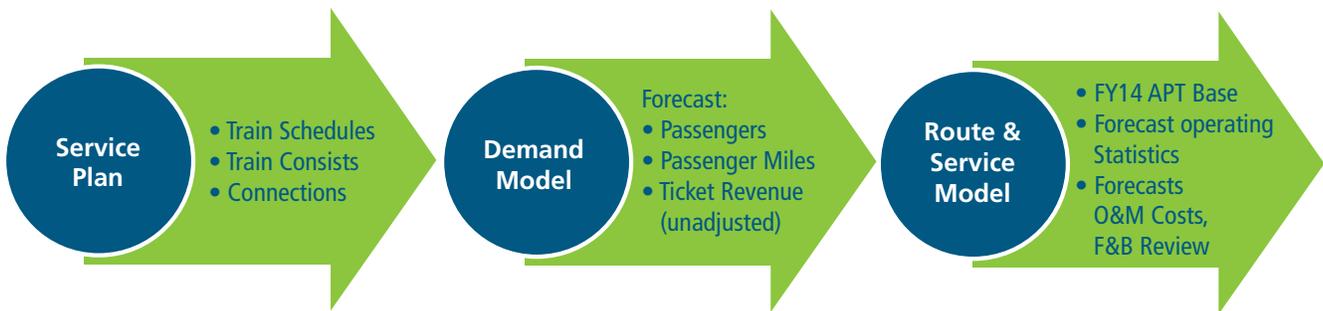
- Timetables (for each train and connection), which provide:
 - Departure and arrival times, that define
 - Travel times
 - Time of day
 - Number of nights
 - Spacing between trains
 - Class(es) of service provided (coach, sleeper, etc.)
 - Frequency of service (daily, tri-weekly, etc.)

- Direct vs. connecting service (and train vs. bus)
- Fares (average yields) by class of service

Route and Service Change Evaluation Model

Once the relevant demand data has been generated by the Amtrak Long Distance Train Demand Forecasting Model administered by Steer Davies Gleave, Amtrak Finance evaluates the forecast cost of each alternative. This evaluation uses Amtrak’s internally-developed Route and Service Change Evaluation Model.

The Route and Service Change Model receives the demand forecasts from the Demand Model and builds the service plan based on the proposed train schedules and equipment consists. Forecast ticket revenue is subsequently adjusted in the Route and Service Change Model to transfer the forecast value of any premium class (sleeping car, business class) food and beverage service amenities to food and beverage revenue. This value is added to the forecast food and beverage revenue based on the forecast passenger miles.



The base unit costs are calculated using FY2014 Amtrak Performance Tracking (APT) data for the specific routes affected, in this case the *City of New Orleans* and *Sunset Limited*. These unit costs are then applied to the demand and operating statistics to forecast the operating and maintenance costs. Statistics that drive these costs include: train miles, labor hours, ticket revenue, passengers, passenger miles, number of equipment sets, unit miles, and train hours. The results are presented within the model in FY2014 dollars inflated to FY2016 for the proposed Gulf Coast services.

PRIIA 209 Methodology

Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA 209) requires that all Amtrak routes under 750 miles in length (and outside of the Boston-Washington Northeast Corridor) must be the financial responsibility of the states they operate through. Costs and payments for these services must be computed using a uniform methodology that is applied equally to all states and state-supported routes. The line-item breakdown and representation of

costs for state-supported services in this study is shown in the PRIIA 209 methodology format, resulting in state payment figures which are consistent with the methodology. PRIIA 209 also requires that states pay for the appropriate share of overhauls of equipment operated in state-supported service through an equipment capital use charge, which is also included in the results of this evaluation for all state-supported routes. These costs are based on the percent share of units used for a given equipment type and the forecast overhaul costs for that equipment type across Amtrak's fleet for the forecast year.

Long Distance Financial Figures

Long distance trains are not subject to the PRIIA 209 cost methodology. Amtrak forecasted figures using its standard Route and Service Change Evaluation Model, as the model can forecast costs for both PRIIA 209 and non-PRIIA 209 Amtrak services. The net incremental operating losses forecast are not currently funded, and require future discussion with the SRC, as Amtrak is under considerable pressure to reduce losses and cannot cover the costs of any of the proposed options. The long distance incremental cost impacts provided in this report represent the total systemwide impact, including instances where some losses to the Gulf Coast long distance service can be partially mitigated through positive connecting revenue impacts to other routes within the Amtrak system.

EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

Overview

At the request of the SRC, Amtrak evaluated five alternatives and sub-alternatives for service to the Gulf Coast. **Alternatives A/A1** clearly outperformed the other alternatives in terms of ridership demand and operating funding need:

Alternative A: Extend the *City of New Orleans* from New Orleans to Orlando and operate a single state-supported round trip between New Orleans and Mobile. This alternative had the best forecast ridership demand.

- **Alternative A1:** Extend the *City of New Orleans* from New Orleans to Orlando without additional service between New Orleans and Mobile. This alternative had the lowest operating funding need.

Amtrak also evaluated two other alternatives, **B/B1** and **C**:

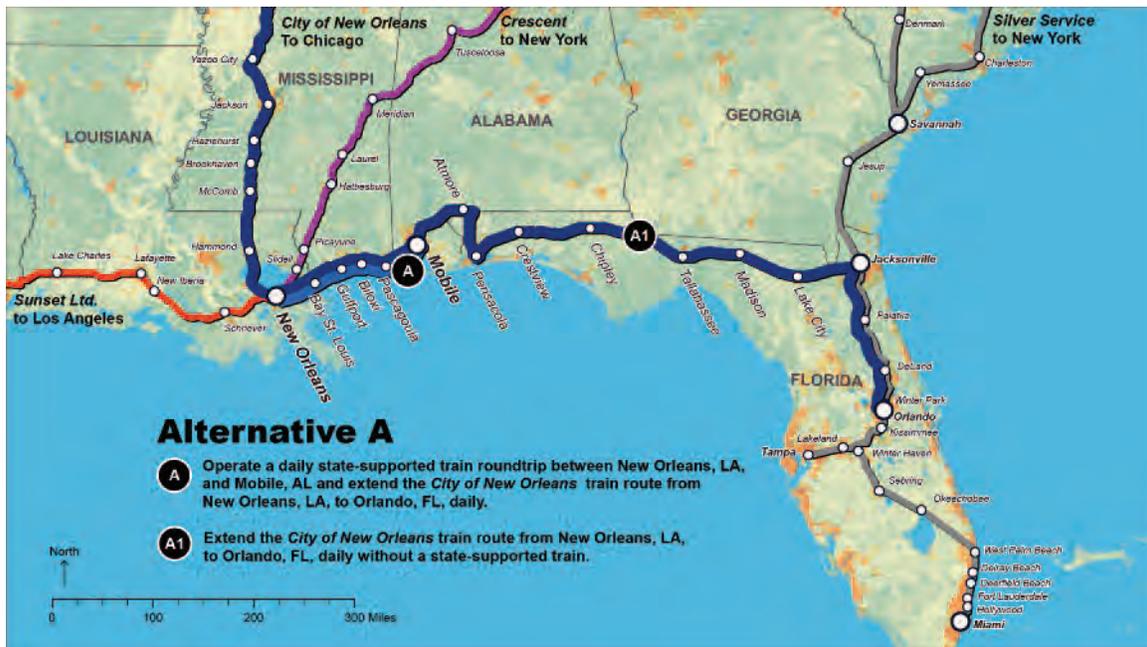
Alternative B: Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile.

- **Alternative B1:** Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile with a dedicated Amtrak Thruway motorcoach connection between Mobile and Jacksonville.

Alternative C: Stand-alone long distance train operating between New Orleans and Orlando.

Detailed descriptions of each alternative, including conceptual schedules, proposed consists and equipment turns, connections and staffing assumptions, are presented on the following pages.

Alternatives A and A1: Extend the City of New Orleans to Florida with (A) or without (A1) an additional State-Supported Train.



Overview

For **Alternative A**, Amtrak would extend a portion of the *City of New Orleans* train through to Orlando. The train would make intermediate station stops at Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Mobile, Atmore, Pensacola, Crestview, Chipley, Tallahassee, Madison, Lake City, Jacksonville, Palatka, DeLand and Winter Park. The eastbound train would depart New Orleans in the late afternoon, Mobile in the evening, Tallahassee early the next morning, Jacksonville mid-morning, and arrive into Orlando late morning. The westbound train would depart Orlando in the early afternoon, Jacksonville late afternoon, Tallahassee in the evening, Mobile early the next morning, and arrive into New Orleans mid-morning. Amtrak would also operate a single state-supported train eastbound in the morning and westbound in the afternoon/evening between New Orleans and Mobile. This alternative envisions operating the daily state-supported round trip between New Orleans and Mobile with intermediate station stops at Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, Biloxi, and Pascagoula. Coach service with at-seat power outlets and AmtrakConnect Wi-Fi would be available on both trains. On the *City of New Orleans* extension, food service would be provided with a Cross-Country Café and equipment would be maintained overnight at the Sanford, FL *Auto Train* Facility. On the state-supported corridor train, food service would consist of café car service provided through a Club Dinette car, and equipment would be maintained in Mobile.

Amtrak also evaluated the impact of the long distance train extension without the added state corridor train, referred to as **Alternative A1**.



The Amtrak southbound City of New Orleans arriving into Jackson, MS. In Alternative A/A1, this train extends beyond New Orleans to Gulf Coast points and Orlando.

Conceptual Schedule

Conceptual schedules for **Alternative A** are shown in the tables on the following pages. For the long distance train, stations on the extended section are highlighted in blue.

Eastbound					Westbound				
Train Name ▶				New Orleans - Mobile	Train Name ▶				New Orleans - Mobile
Train Number ▶				TBD 4	Train Number ▶				TBD 3
Normal Days of Operation ▶				Daily	Normal Days of Operation ▶				Daily
On Board Service ▶				R C W	On Board Service ▶				R C W
Station	Mile				Station	Mile			
New Orleans, LA	0.0	CST	Dp	8:00 AM	Mobile, AL	0.0	CST	Dp	5:00 PM
Bay St. Louis, MS	56.0	CST		9:13 AM	Pascagoula, MS	40.0	CST		5:40 PM
Gulfport, MS	71.0	CST		9:35 AM	Biloxi, MS	60.0	CST		6:04 PM
Biloxi, MS	83.0	CST		9:53 AM	Gulfport, MS	72.0	CST		6:22 PM
Pascagoula, MS	103.0	CST		10:17 AM	Bay St. Louis, MS	87.0	CST		6:44 PM
Mobile, AL	143.0	CST	Ar	11:13 AM	New Orleans, LA	143.0	CST	Ar	8:23 PM
On Board Service Reference Marks:					On Board Service Reference Marks:				
B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi					B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi				

Southbound				
Train Name ▶				City of New Orleans
Train Number ▶				59
Normal Days of Operation ▶				Daily
On Board Service ▶				R S D Ba W
Station	Mile			
Chicago, IL	0.0	CST	Dp	8:05 PM
Homewood, IL	25.0	CST		8:54 PM
Kankakee, IL	57.0	CST		9:23 PM
Champaign-Urbana, IL	129.0	CST		10:34 PM
Mattoon, IL	174.0	CST		11:13 PM
Effingham, IL	201.0	CST		11:37 PM
Centralia, IL	254.0	CST		12:25 AM
Carbondale, IL	310.0	CST		1:21 AM
		CST		1:26 AM
Fulton, KY	407.0	CST		3:14 AM
Newbern-Dyersburg, TN	442.0	CST		3:56 AM
Memphis, TN	520.0	CST		6:27 AM
		CST		6:50 AM
Greenwood, MS	644.0	CST		9:00 AM
Yazoo City, MS	697.0	CST		9:51 AM
Jackson, MS	741.0	CST		11:20 AM
Hazlehurst, MS	777.0	CST		11:55 AM
Brookhaven, MS	797.0	CST		12:15 PM
McComb, MS	821.0	CST		12:40 PM
Hammond, LA	873.0	CST		1:28 PM
New Orleans, LA	926.0	CST		3:32 PM
		CST		5:00 PM
Bay St. Louis, MS	982.0	CST		6:13 PM
Gulfport, MS	997.0	CST		6:35 PM
Biloxi, MS	1009.0	CST		6:53 PM
Pascagoula, MS	1029.0	CST		7:17 PM
Mobile, AL	1069.0	CST		8:18 PM
Atmore, AL	1114.0	CST		9:12 PM
Pensacola, FL	1173.0	CST		10:39 PM
		CST		10:45 PM
Crestview, FL	1222.0	CST		11:49 PM
Chipley, FL (CT)	1289.0	CST		1:11 AM
Tallahassee, FL (ET)	1375.0	EST		5:00 AM
Madison, FL	1431.0	EST		6:14 AM
Lake City, FL	1480.0	EST		7:04 AM
Jacksonville, FL	1546.0	EST		8:15 AM
		EST		8:31 AM
Palatka, FL	1604.0	EST		9:36 AM
DeLand, FL	1656.0	EST		10:21 AM
Winter Park, FL	1688.0	EST		11:02 AM
Orlando, FL	1693.0	EST	Ar	11:30 AM

On Board Service Reference Marks:

B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi

Northbound				
Train Name ▶				City of New Orleans
Train Number ▶				58
Normal Days of Operation ▶				Daily
On Board Service ▶				R S D Ba W
Station	Mile			
Orlando, FL	0.0	EST	Dp	4:15 PM
Winter Park, FL	5.0	EST		4:33 PM
DeLand, FL	37.0	EST		5:15 PM
Palatka, FL	89.0	EST		6:01 PM
Jacksonville, FL	147.0	EST		7:25 PM
		EST		7:45 PM
Lake City, FL	213.0	EST		8:48 PM
Madison, FL	262.0	EST		9:38 PM
Tallahassee, FL (ET)	318.0	EST		11:10 PM
Chipley, FL (CT)	404.0	CST		12:11 AM
Crestview, FL	471.0	CST		1:33 AM
Pensacola, FL	520.0	CST		2:37 AM
		CST		2:43 AM
Atmore, AL	579.0	CST		4:10 AM
Mobile, AL	624.0	CST		6:03 AM
Pascagoula, MS	664.0	CST		6:43 AM
Biloxi, MS	684.0	CST		7:07 AM
Gulfport, MS	696.0	CST		7:25 AM
Bay St. Louis, MS	711.0	CST		7:47 AM
New Orleans, LA	767.0	CST		9:30 AM
		CST		1:45 PM
Hammond, LA	820.0	CST		2:45 PM
McComb, MS	872.0	CST		3:32 PM
Brookhaven, MS	896.0	CST		3:56 PM
Hazlehurst, MS	916.0	CST		4:17 PM
Jackson, MS	952.0	CST		5:44 PM
Yazoo City, MS	996.0	CST		6:42 PM
Greenwood, MS	1049.0	CST		7:37 PM
Memphis, TN	1173.0	CST		10:00 PM
		CST		10:40 PM
Newbern-Dyersburg, TN	1251.0	CST		12:22 AM
Fulton, KY	1286.0	CST		1:04 AM
Carbondale, IL	1383.0	CST		3:11 AM
		CST		3:16 AM
Centralia, IL	1439.0	CST		4:10 AM
Effingham, IL	1492.0	CST		4:57 AM
Mattoon, IL	1519.0	CST		5:23 AM
Champaign-Urbana, IL	1564.0	CST		6:10 AM
Kankakee, IL	1636.0	CST		7:13 AM
Homewood, IL	1668.0	CST		7:44 AM
Chicago, IL	1693.0	CST	Ar	9:00 AM

On Board Service Reference Marks:

B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi

Connections

Alternative A provides the greatest number of possible connection options. By extending the *City of New Orleans* to Orlando, passengers could travel between Gulf Coast stations and points on the *City of New Orleans* route such as Jackson, Memphis and Chicago without changing trains. Passengers from Gulf Coast stations and points on the existing *City of New Orleans* route could connect with the *Silver Meteor* at Orlando for travel to points south to West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami, or use the Amtrak Thruway motorcoach service to reach Lakeland, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Bradenton or Sarasota. Passengers at Jacksonville can connect with the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* for destinations in Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and the Northeast Corridor (Washington – Philadelphia – New York City). At New Orleans, passengers could connect overnight with the *Sunset Limited* service to Los Angeles. Passengers from Gulf Coast stations could connect at Jackson with Amtrak Thruway interline motorcoach service to Shreveport. Additionally, passengers from Gulf Coast stations could connect with Amtrak Thruway motorcoach service at Carbondale to St. Louis. Finally, access to Chicago Union Station would permit connections with Amtrak’s *Empire Builder*, *California Zephyr*, *Southwest Chief*, *Lincoln Service*, *Blue Water*, *Pere Marquette*, *Wolverine Service*, *Hiawatha Service*, *Capitol Limited*, *Lake Shore Limited*, *Cardinal* and *Hoosier State*.

Amtrak also has the ability to offer through ticketing on connecting bus services under its nationwide partnership with Greyhound. This partnership would allow passengers to access the frequent service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, as well as connections to/from Alexandria, Lafayette, Beaumont and Houston. Amtrak and Greyhound both use New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal, allowing for convenient access and ease of connectivity at this important location on the route.

Consist

The *City of New Orleans* currently operates with three sets of equipment. A fourth and fifth set of equipment will be necessary, but they will be smaller sets since they will include only equipment needed for the operation between New Orleans and Orlando. This alternative assumes that the P-42 locomotive, one Superliner coach, one Superliner coach-baggage, one Superliner Cross-Country Café car and one Superliner sleeping car would operate through from Chicago to Orlando on a year-round basis, while the rest of the consist would turn at New Orleans. On some peak dates, however, an additional coach and/or the transition sleeping car from the *City of New Orleans* may also need to operate through in order to capture all ridership demand and revenue. This concept of operating trains of variable lengths depending on demand is consistent with the “right-sizing” initiative in place for nearly all routes in Amtrak’s Long Distance Business Line, where consists vary in size according to seasonal demand.

The state-supported round trip would require a single P-42, two Horizon coaches and a Horizon Club Dinette (offering both food service and Business Class) in dedicated Gulf Coast service.

A table of the equipment used on each train operating east of New Orleans is presented below:

Alternative A/A1 Consist Proposal			
Equipment Type	Locomotives/ Cars per Trainset	Incremental Number of Trainsets**	Incremental Number of Locomotives/ Cars Needed
City of New Orleans Extension			
P-42 Diesel Locomotive	1	2	2
Superliner Coach*	1	2	2
Superliner Cross-Country Café	1	2	2
Superliner Sleeper	1	2	2
Superliner Coach-Baggage	1	2	2
Superliner Transition Sleeper*	On Demand		
State-Supported Train (Not included in Alternative A1)			
P-42 Diesel Locomotive	1	1	1
Horizon Coach	2	1	2
Horizon or Amfleet-I Club Dinette	1	1	1
* Second coach per trainset, and total of 4 additional coaches needed on the route, on demand during peak			
** For the <i>City of New Orleans</i> extension, all equipment operating through from New Orleans to Orlando requires a five-set rotation compared to the current three-set rotation.			



Amtrak Superliner Sleeping Car Roomette, set up for daytime use, similar to the sleeping accommodations which would be available on the proposed long distance service. At night, the seats fold into a lower bunk bed, an upper bunk is lowered from above.



Cross-Country Café car, with tables for sit-down meal service and a counter for ordering food.

Staffing

The long distance train would be staffed with 1-2 engineers, conductor and assistant conductor (3-4 crewmembers) who are subject to Federal Hours of Service regulations. The number of engineers is determined based on Amtrak's labor agreements. This study assumes these crews would change at Pensacola and Jacksonville. In addition, each train would be staffed with an on-board service (OBS) crew of 5, including:

- One coach attendant for the coach section
- One Sleeping car attendant for the sleeping car
- One chef, one service attendant and one lead service attendant in the Cross Country Café to provide food service.
- If the *City of New Orleans* extension must operate with an additional coach and/or Transition Sleeper for peak trips, the additional cars also will trigger a sixth OBS employee, one additional attendant.

On-board service positions are not subject to Federal Hours of Service regulations and these employees will work through from New Orleans to Orlando, with rest hours for portions of the trip during the middle of the night. As with **Alternative C**, Amtrak forces would maintain the long distance train at the Sanford *Auto Train* mechanical facility.

The state-supported trains would be staffed with an engineer, conductor, assistant conductor and a single lead service attendant providing food service in the Club-Dinette. The financial evaluation assumes that trains would be serviced by a mechanical contractor at Mobile and by Amtrak's in-house mechanical forces in New Orleans.

Performance

If **Alternative A** (operation of both the long distance and state-supported trains) is selected, the posited results would include the following:

- 153,900 annual passengers (34,800 on the state-supported service plus 119,100 on the *City of New Orleans* extension).
- 65.1 million annual rail passenger miles (3.8 million on the state-supported service plus 61.3 million on the *City of New Orleans* extension).
- \$12.72 million in annual ticket and food & beverage revenue (\$756,000 on the state-supported service plus \$11.96 million on the *City of New Orleans* extension).
- \$3.93 million in annual operating expenses under PRIIA 209 for the state-supported service.
- \$3.17 million in annual state operating payments under PRIIA 209.
- \$609,000 in annual equipment capital expenses charged to the state partners under PRIIA 209 for the state-supported service.
- \$3.78 million in total PRIIA 209 state payments (operating and equipment capital) for the state-supported service.

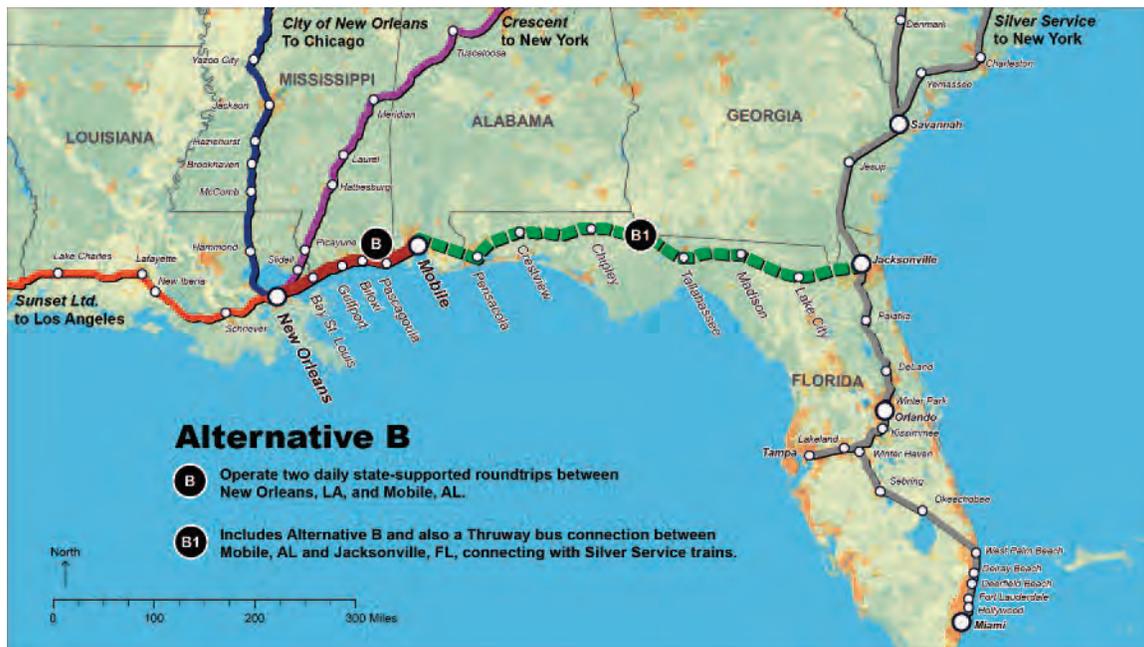
- \$5.71 million in annual incremental operating loss as a result of the *City of New Orleans* extension.
- \$9.49 million in combined annual funding needs for the *City of New Orleans* extension and state-supported service, the net of the \$5.71 million annual incremental operating loss for the long distance train east of New Orleans and the \$3.78 million net operating and equipment capital expense for the state-supported service.
- Potential cost reductions of \$654,000 annually are possible if the chef position in the Cross-Country Café is removed from the proposal, and food is instead prepared and served by the Lead Service Attendant and Service Attendant. A trial of this staffing plan is currently underway on the *City of New Orleans*.
- Conversely, potential additional costs are possible if the third coach and/or Transition Sleeper must operate through from New Orleans to Florida on a regular basis in order to realize all demand and revenue on all trips during peak periods. Based on figures provided by Amtrak Finance, an incremental cost of \$363,000 is possible for the cars to be added to the busiest 25% of trips in a given year.

If **Alternative A1** is chosen, the most notable variations to the results listed above would include:

- 138,300 annual incremental passengers (down from 153,900).
- 63.0 million annual rail passenger miles (down from 65.1 million).
- \$5.48 million in combined annual funding needs for the long distance train extension (down from \$5.71 million).
- The same potential cost adjustments regarding the chef position and/or addition of peak season equipment in **Alternative A** also apply to **Alternative A1**.

Forecast long distance expenses included in this evaluation are incremental in nature and do not reflect allocations of system-wide expenses.

Alternatives B and B1: Two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans and Mobile.



Overview

Alternatives B and B1 envision operation of two daily state-supported round trips between New Orleans, LA and Mobile, AL, making the same intermediate station stops as the state-supported train in **Alternative A**. The two round trips (listed in the accompanying timetables as TBD 3, 4, 5 and 6) would include one morning train in each direction, and one late afternoon/early evening train in each direction. One round trip (operating eastbound in the afternoon/evening and westbound in the morning) would use equipment which currently sits in New Orleans in between scheduled runs of the *City of New Orleans*. Coach and lounge car service would be provided. The other round trip (eastbound in the morning and westbound in the afternoon/evening) would use a dedicated trainset and could include coach, Business Class and café car service. Both trains would offer AmtrakConnect Wi-Fi service and at-seat power outlets. One of the coaches could also be designated an Amtrak Quiet Car if the state partners so desire.

For **Alternative B1**, Amtrak also evaluated a connecting motorcoach operation between Mobile and Jacksonville, providing connectivity between the new service and stations east of Mobile, as well as a connection to the New York-Miami *Silver Star* at Jacksonville.

Conceptual Schedule

Conceptual schedules for **Alternatives B and B1** are shown in the tables below:

New Orleans-Mobile Gulf Coast Service Westbound					New Orleans-Mobile Gulf Coast Service Eastbound						
Train Name ▶			New Orleans - Mobile	New Orleans - Mobile	Train Name ▶			New Orleans - Mobile	New Orleans - Mobile		
Train Number ▶			TBD 5	TBD 3	Train Number ▶			TBD 4	TBD 6		
Normal Days of Operation ▶			Daily	Daily	Normal Days of Operation ▶			Daily	Daily		
On Board Service ▶			R C W	R C W	On Board Service ▶			R C W	R C W		
Station	Mile				Station	Mile					
Mobile, AL	0.0	CST	Dp	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	New Orleans, LA	0.0	CST	Dp	8:00 AM	5:45 PM
Pascagoula, MS	40.0	CST		7:40 AM	5:40 PM	Bay St. Louis, MS	56.0	CST		9:13 AM	6:58 PM
Biloxi, MS	60.0	CST		8:04 AM	6:04 PM	Gulfport, MS	71.0	CST		9:35 AM	7:20 PM
Gulfport, MS	72.0	CST		8:22 AM	6:22 PM	Biloxi, MS	83.0	CST		9:53 AM	7:38 PM
Bay St. Louis, MS	87.0	CST		8:44 AM	6:44 PM	Pascagoula, MS	103.0	CST		10:17 AM	8:02 PM
New Orleans, LA	143.0	CST	Ar	10:23 AM	8:23 PM	Mobile, AL	143.0	CST	Ar	11:13 AM	8:58 PM
On Board Service Reference Marks:					On Board Service Reference Marks:						
B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WIFI					B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WIFI						

For **Alternative B1**, the Thruway motorcoach schedule assumption was:

Proposed Dedicated Thruway Bus				
Daily	Days of Operation			Daily
6:39 AM	Dp	Silver Star connects at Jacksonville		Ar
7:30 AM		Jacksonville, FL		9:55 PM
8:45 AM		Lake City, FL		8:45 PM
9:40 AM		Madison, FL		7:50 PM
11:20 AM		Tallahassee, FL (ET)		6:35 PM
12:00 Noon		Chipley, FL (CT)		4:30 PM
1:20 PM		Crestview, FL		3:10 PM
2:35 PM		Pensacola, FL (Airport)		1:05 PM
3:45 PM	Ar	Mobile, AL		Dp
				11:45 AM

Connections

Trains TBD 5 and TBD 6 would connect with the *City of New Orleans* at New Orleans. In **Alternative B1**, Trains TBD 3 and TBD 4 would also connect with the proposed dedicated Thruway bus from Mobile to Jacksonville, which would provide a connection with Amtrak's *Silver Star* Trains 91 and 92 service to Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and the Northeast Corridor (Wash-

ington – Philadelphia – New York). At New Orleans, passengers would be able to connect overnight with the *Sunset Limited*.

Amtrak, through its nationwide partnership with Greyhound, also has the ability to offer through ticketing on connecting bus services, such as the frequent service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, as well as connections to/from Alexandria, Shreveport, Lafayette, Beaumont and Houston. Amtrak and Greyhound both use the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal in New Orleans, affording passengers an easy connection.

Consist

Two sets of equipment would be used for the state-supported service in **Alternative B**. One round trip (shown here as Trains TBD 5 and TBD 6) would use a P-42, two Superliner coaches, a

Alternative B Consist Proposal			
Equipment Type	Locomotives/ Cars per Trainset	Trainsets Used in Daily Service	Locomotives and Cars Used
State-Supported Trains			
P-42 Diesel Locomotive*	1	2	2
Superliner Coach	2	1	2
Superliner Sightseer Lounge	1	1	1
Horizon Coach	2	1	2
Horizon or Amfleet-I Club Dinette	1	1	1

* P-42 Diesels are used to pull both a single Superliner trainset and a single Horizon/Amfleet trainset.



Amtrak's Horizon Business Class features spacious leather seating with two seats (shown) on one side of the aisle and single seats on the other side of the aisle.



Amtrak Horizon Coaches feature reclining seats, overhead reading lights, power outlets at each seat pair and AmtrakConnect Wi-Fi.

Superliner coach-baggage and Superliner Sightseer Lounge which otherwise would layover in New Orleans between regularly scheduled *City of New Orleans* trips. The other trainset would use a single P-42, two Horizon coaches and a Horizon Club Dinette in dedicated Gulf Coast service. The table on the following page shows the equipment required for each trainset.

Staffing

Each train would be staffed with an engineer, conductor, assistant conductor and attendant providing food service in the Sightseer Lounge car (Trains TBD 5 and TBD 6) or Club Dinette (Trains TBD 3 and TBD 4). The financial evaluation assumes trains being serviced by a mechanical contractor at Mobile and by Amtrak's in-house mechanical forces in New Orleans.

Performance

Amtrak Finance, using demand data from Amtrak Market Research and SDG, forecast the following performance for the proposed service in **Alternative B**:

- 38,400 annual passengers.
- 3.79 million annual rail passenger miles.
- \$704,000 annual ticket and food & beverage revenue.

- \$6.15 million in annual operating expenses under the PRIIA 209 methodology.
- \$5.45 million in annual state operating payments under the PRIIA 209 methodology.
- \$1.52 million in annual equipment capital expenses charged to the state partners under the PRIIA 209 methodology.
- \$6.97 million in annual state payments.

Adding the Thruway connection between Mobile and Jacksonville for **Alternative B1** increases the state payment by \$1.26 million annually. Due to the length of the Thruway route, a separate vehicle and driver would be required for each one way trip, with drivers likely required to overnight with their vehicles away from their home terminal. Specific ridership, revenue and financial performance data for **Alternative B1** was forecast as follows:

- 43,400 annual passengers.
- 5.228 million annual rail passenger miles.
- \$1.05 million in annual ticket and food & beverage revenue.
- \$7.78 million in annual operating expenses under the PRIIA 209 methodology.
- \$1.52 million in annual equipment capital expenses charged to the state partners under the PRIIA 209 methodology.
- \$8.26 million in annual state payments.

Conceptual Schedule

The conceptual schedule for Alternative C is shown in the table below as Trains TBD 1 & 2:

New Orleans-Orlando Gulf Coast Service Westbound					
Train Name ▶					New Orleans-Orlando
Train Number ▶					TBD 1
Normal Days of Operation ▶					Daily
On Board Service ▶					R S D Ba W
Station	Mile				
Orlando, FL	0.0	EST	Dp		4:15 PM
Winter Park, FL	5.0	EST			4:33 PM
DeLand, FL	37.0	EST			5:15 PM
Palatka, FL	89.0	EST			6:01 PM
Jacksonville, FL	147.0	EST			7:25 PM
		EST			7:45 PM
Lake City, FL	213.0	EST			8:48 PM
Madison, FL	262.0	EST			9:38 PM
Tallahassee, FL (ET)	318.0	EST			11:10 PM
Chipley, FL (CT)	404.0	CST			12:11 AM
Crestview, FL	471.0	CST			1:33 AM
Pensacola, FL	520.0	CST			2:37 AM
		CST			2:43 AM
Atmore, AL	579.0	CST			4:10 AM
Mobile, AL	624.0	CST			6:03 AM
Pascagoula, MS	664.0	CST			6:43 AM
Biloxi, MS	684.0	CST			7:07 AM
Gulfport, MS	696.0	CST			7:25 AM
Bay St. Louis, MS	711.0	CST			7:47 AM
New Orleans, LA	767.0	CST	Ar		9:30 AM

On Board Service Reference Marks:
 B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi

New Orleans-Orlando Gulf Coast Service Eastbound					
Train Name ▶					New Orleans-Orlando
Train Number ▶					TBD 2
Normal Days of Operation ▶					Daily
On Board Service ▶					R S D Ba W
Station	Mile				
New Orleans, LA	0.0	CST	Dp		5:00 PM
Bay St. Louis, MS	56.0	CST			6:13 PM
Gulfport, MS	71.0	CST			6:35 PM
Biloxi, MS	83.0	CST			6:53 PM
Pascagoula, MS	103.0	CST			7:17 PM
Mobile, AL	143.0	CST			8:18 PM
Atmore, AL	188.0	CST			9:12 PM
Pensacola, FL	247.0	CST			10:39 PM
		CST			10:45 PM
Crestview, FL	296.0	CST			11:49 PM
Chipley, FL (CT)	363.0	CST			1:11 AM
Tallahassee, FL (ET)	449.0	EST			5:00 AM
Madison, FL	505.0	EST			6:14 AM
Lake City, FL	554.0	EST			7:04 AM
Jacksonville, FL	620.0	EST			8:15 AM
		EST			8:31 AM
Palatka, FL	678.0	EST			9:36 AM
DeLand, FL	730.0	EST			10:21 AM
Winter Park, FL	762.0	EST			11:02 AM
Orlando, FL	767.0	EST	Ar		11:30 AM

On Board Service Reference Marks:
 B - Business Class, Ba - Checked Baggage, Bi - Bicycles, C - Café/Lounge, Ca - Cart Service, D - Dining Car, F - First Class, R - Reserved Coach, S - Sleeping Car, U - Unreserved Coach, W - WiFi

Connections

This train offers same-day connections with the *City of New Orleans* at New Orleans for points north to Jackson, Memphis and Chicago, the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* at Jacksonville for points north in Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and the Northeast Corridor (Washington – Philadelphia – New York), and the *Silver Meteor* at Orlando for points south to West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. This train would also connect with existing Amtrak Thruway motorcoach service to Lakeland, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Bradenton and Sarasota. At New Orleans, passengers can connect overnight with the *Sunset Limited*.

Amtrak, through its nationwide partnership with Greyhound, also has the ability to offer through ticketing on connecting bus services, such as the frequent service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, as well as connections to/from Alexandria, Shreveport, Lafayette, Beaumont and Houston. Amtrak and Greyhound both use the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal in New Orleans, so bus-to-train connections are facilitated within the same building.

Consist

Three sets of equipment are required to operate this service, each consisting of one P-42 locomotive, one Superliner coach, one Superliner coach-baggage (coach with checked baggage room), one Superliner Cross-Country Café (to offer food service) and one Superliner sleeping car. Coach and sleeping car service is offered on board. Equipment would turn around during the day at New Orleans, and would be maintained overnight at the current *Auto Train* maintenance facility near Orlando at Sanford, FL. A table of the equipment used for each of the three trainsets is presented below:

Alternative C Consist Proposal			
Equipment Type	Locomotives/ Cars per Trainset	Trainsets Used in Daily Service	Locomotives and Cars Used
New Long-Distance Service			
P-42 Diesel Locomotive	1	3	3
Superliner Coach	1	3	3
Superliner Coach-Baggage	1	3	3
Superliner Cross-Country Café	1	3	3
Superliner Sleeper	1	3	3

* P-42 Diesels are used to pull both a single Superliner trainset and a single Horizon/Amfleet trainset.

Staffing

Each train would be staffed with an engineer, conductor and assistant conductor who are subject to Federal Hours of Service regulations. A second engineer would also work the train where applicable, per Amtrak’s labor agreements. Amtrak assumes these crews will change at Pensacola and Jacksonville. In addition, each train would be staffed with:

- A coach attendant for the coach section
- Sleeping car attendant for the sleeping car
- Service attendant, chef and lead service attendant in the Cross-Country Café to provide food service.

These attendant positions are not subject to Federal Hours of Service regulations and these employees will work through from New Orleans to Orlando, with rest hours for portions of the trip during the middle of the night.

Performance

Amtrak Finance, using demand data from Amtrak Market Research and SDG, forecast the following performance for the proposed service in **Alternative C**:

- 69,100 annual passengers.
- 24.04 million annual rail passenger miles.
- \$4.03 million in annual ticket and food and beverage revenue.
- \$14.4 million in annual incremental operating loss.

Forecast expenses included in this evaluation alternative are incremental in nature and do not reflect allocations of system-wide expenses.

Alternatives A/A1 yield superior ridership demand and cost efficiency over **Alternatives B/B1** and **C** as they allow for daily “one-seat ride” service between the Gulf Coast stations and the current *City of New Orleans* route. Since the number of passengers who are willing to make a single connection is also greater than those willing to make two connections to continue a trip, ridership also increases on additional Amtrak services which connect to both the future Gulf route as well as the existing *City of New Orleans*. Cost efficiencies are also present, as a run-through operation requires less additional equipment than a stand-alone New Orleans-Orlando passenger train with dedicated equipment.

COMPARISON OF RESULTS

A comparison of the full range of alternatives studied is summarized in the table below, in 2016 dollars:

Gulf Coast Service Alternatives					
	Alternative A <i>(Extend City of New Orleans, 1 daily state train)</i>	Alternative A1 <i>(Extend City of New Orleans, no state trains)</i>	Alternative B (2 <i>daily state-supported Trains)</i>	Alternative B1 <i>(2 daily state trains with Thruway to JAX)</i>	Alternative C <i>(NOL-ORL standalone long distance Train)</i>
Endpoints	New Orleans-Orlando, 2nd train New Orleans-Mobile	New Orleans to Orlando	New Orleans to Mobile	New Orleans-Mobile, Thruway to Jacksonville	New Orleans to Orlando
Ridership	153,900	138,300	38,400	43,400	69,100
Passenger miles	65.14M	63.00M	3.79M	5.23M*	24.04M
Total Revenue	\$12.72M	\$12.25M	\$704K	\$1.05M	\$4.03M
PRR 209 Operating Costs	\$3.93M	N/A	\$6.15M	\$7.78M	N/A
PRR 209 Equipment Capital Use Charge	\$609K	N/A	\$1.52M	\$1.52M	N/A
PRR 209 State Payment	\$3.78M	N/A	\$6.97M	\$8.26M	N/A
Long Distance Incremental Cost**	\$17.67M	\$17.73M	n/a	n/a	\$18.43M
Long Distance Incremental Loss	\$5.71M	\$5.48M	n/a	n/a	\$14.40M
Total Annual Funding Need	\$9.49M	\$5.48M	\$6.97M	\$8.26M	\$14.40M

Please note that some figures may not sum precisely due to rounding.

*All passenger miles are rail only.

** Net of route-specific losses and connecting route impacts.

As can be seen in the table above, **Alternatives A and A1** clearly outperform the other alternatives in terms of ridership, and both include service through to Orlando from New Orleans. **Alternative A1** offers the lowest forecast total annual funding need, while **Alternative A** features the highest ridership.

MARKETING & SALES RESOURCES

Amtrak Marketing has developed a sample strategy for marketing and sales for the analyzed alternatives designed to maximize publicity and stimulate travel demand. This strategy includes paid advertising, strategic public relations (PR) initiatives, social media campaigns, and partnerships with local traffic generators, educational institutions and tourist attractions. A well-managed publicity campaign could include a “whistle stop” inaugural run designed to maximize media exposure. This sample strategy is based on recent Amtrak experience launching other routes, many of which have benefited from widely advertised service launches.

With the proposal for new Amtrak Service between New Orleans, LA and Orlando, FL, there are several notable opportunities which can be leveraged to raise the public profile of any future service both in the general marketplace as well as through earned media gained from public relations and social media. This service would not just reconnect a region of the country that has had no Amtrak service since Hurricane Katrina, it would serve to connect important southern economies and support growing tourism in this prosperous and economically active region. New Amtrak service would facilitate group travel, increase the availability of public transportation for student travelers, and provide opportunities for business and government travel throughout the region.

Strategy

An integrated marketing strategy would be a vital component of any plan to inaugurate any new service. It will be important to develop a brand identity, paid media strategy and the route specific collateral about the service that will be used to consistently communicate about the new service. These elements would also be used in communication and PR about the service and also support a social media presence. A paid media schedule could begin to promote an inaugural train and whistle stop tour, but there will be a need to identify funding for these efforts.

Ideally, messaging and public relations efforts should begin a year before the scheduled service launch. An integrated public relations and media relations campaign including news releases and public forums will help to educate and inform the public and communities along the route about the future service.

Four months before scheduled service launch, the date of an inaugural train and whistle stop tour to promote the new service could be announced. The inaugural train could include a stop with celebrations and media events in each community, picking up dignitaries and key stakeholders along the way, and culminating with a final grand event at a chosen destination station. This is also an appropriate time to announce an introductory fare offer (if determined by pricing) to increase awareness. Another and often more efficient method is to announce city pair pricing between various destinations along the route.

Social media can be used to create awareness, leveraging the social media efforts and market penetration of the various partners to ensure a widespread reach. Grass roots relationships and partnerships developed and implemented including convention/visitors bureau (CVB) memberships and engagement with business and political communities would greatly enhance such an effort, and would pave the way for a paid media program that would begin two weeks ahead of service launch.



Amtrak and Virginia state partner officials cut the ribbon to launch Amtrak's state-supported service to Lynchburg in October of 2009. Amtrak's successful state partnership with Virginia will result in this train being extended further south, to Roanoke, in 2016.

Tactics

The marketing effort would center around the identified markets along the route. An integrated effort, involving Amtrak and its partners, would target these markets heavily, leveraging our partners' knowledge and market penetration to ensure effective outreach. Key efforts would include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- Promote student travel by connection and sponsorship of colleges and universities along the route.

- Develop and promote Amtrak Vacations packages (route specific) (12-14 months prior to inaugural train).
- Business and government travel (military installations and major employers in the region). Include eligibility for Amtrak Federal Fare program.
- Family reunion travel.
- Sports sponsorships (both college and professional).

To ensure this effort is a success, Amtrak would leverage its existing marketing resources heavily. As the nation's only national passenger rail carrier, Amtrak possesses significant advertising, marketing, ticketing and reservation operations that would support any of the identified service alternatives. These would include:

- Full service web service (route page and regional specific content, Amtrak policies, schedules, Google Maps, etc.)
- Email marketing
- Reservation system
- Contact centers
- E-ticketing
- Thruway bus connectivity
- Amtrak Vacations
- National asset development, TV, radio, digital
- Social media support

NEXT STEPS

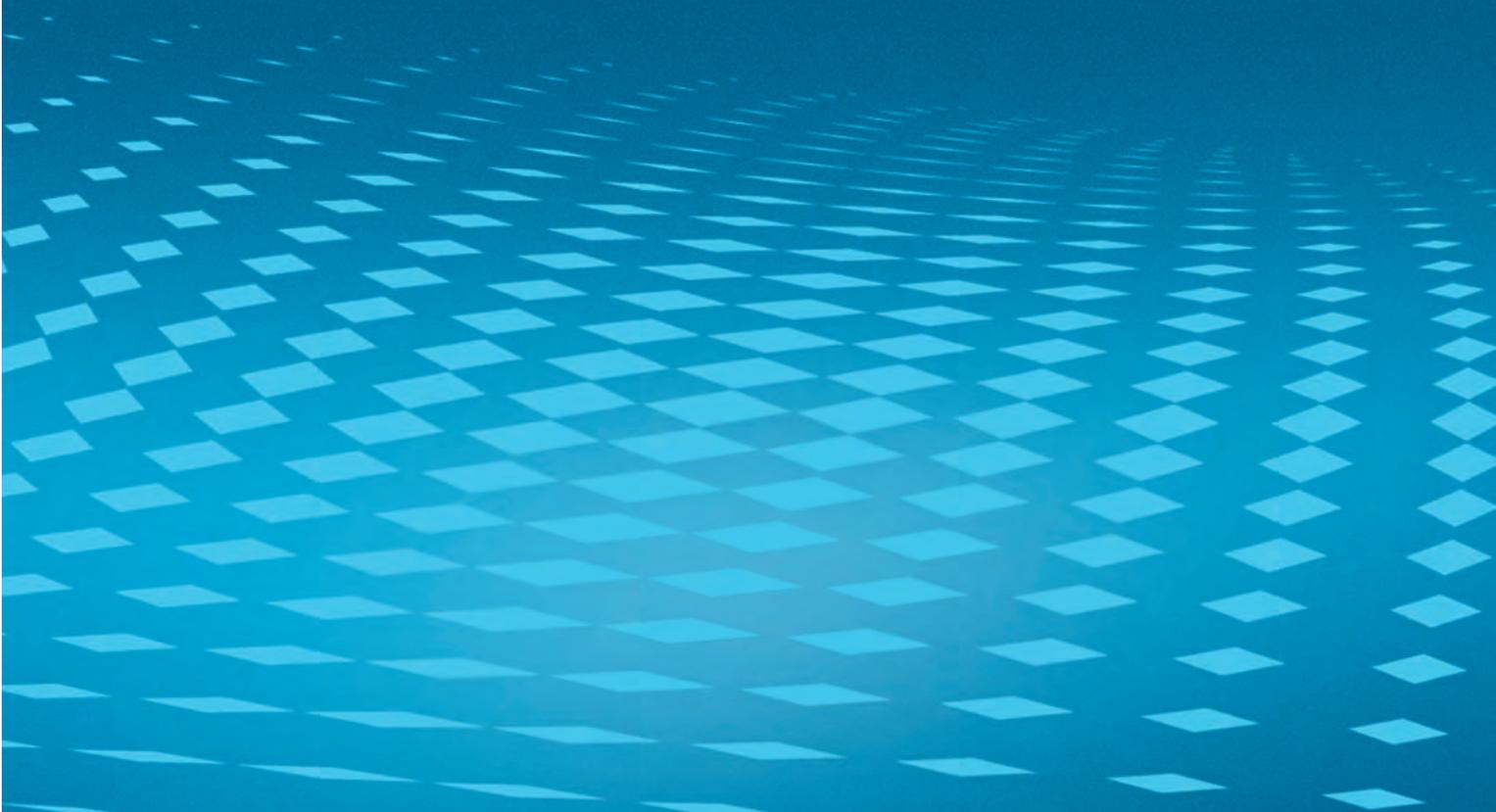
The financial evaluations performed by Amtrak and included here examine only the operating cost impacts of the proposed long distance services, or operating and equipment capital state pricing for state-supported services under PRIIA 209. The evaluation figures provided here do not include the capital costs associated with stations or any infrastructure improvements necessary to support track speeds equal to those available for the last passenger trains to regularly operate over the Gulf Coast route in 2005. These figures also do not include any incremental costs for Positive Train Control or capacity improvements needed to operate passenger trains alongside existing freight traffic.

To proceed with any of the proposed alternatives evaluated here, Amtrak and the SRC will need to:

- *Approach the host railroads (chiefly CSXT) to identify any infrastructure needs for the proposed service.* A capacity study may be necessary, and infrastructure improvements necessary to support passenger operation may be identified.
- *Develop operating and capital funding mechanisms to fund any proposed service.* Such solutions will need to either assure funding for state supported services of under 750 miles route length per PRIIA 209, or will need to assure funding that is sufficient to recover any incremental costs incurred by Amtrak as a result of changes to the long distance route network.
- *Identify and build support from institutions which are likely to benefit from, and attract riders to, the proposed Gulf Coast service.* Amtrak and the SRC will need to reach out to colleges / universities, tourist attractions, communities, chambers of commerce and other major government and private institutions to determine how proposed rail service can provide the most useful transportation options to as many such potential traffic generators as possible.
- *Work with communities on plans to revitalize stations to support service.* Throughout the Amtrak system, physical station facilities for new routes are the responsibility of communities and states served. Amtrak can assist the SRC in working with communities to ensure that station facilities will be in proper condition for service.
- *Further refine service proposals as a clearer picture emerges of the infrastructure environment and additional marketing opportunities are forged along the route.* As Amtrak and the SRC proceed with the other next steps, changes to assumptions for the service plan and potential economic viability of the route may emerge, and should be explored in follow-up evaluation work.

NOTES

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