The Future of Rail in North Carolina

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Presentation Outline

Rail Federal Grants and Economic Development
Southeast Corridor Initiative and Commission
Passenger Rail Development and Projects
Freight Rail Projects and Initiatives
Rail Safety Initiatives
State Rail Plan Update
Rail Division Mission

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods on North Carolina’s railroads through freight, passenger and safety programs, supporting job creation and economic growth.
Using Rail to Spark Economic Development

Passenger rail connects urban and rural centers
- Station areas provide economic development opportunities
- Rail provides efficient and fast backbone service to connect to other modes
- Allows productivity while moving

Freight rail moves large quantities of goods efficiently over distances
- Intermodal traffic is growing on Class I railroads
- Short line railroads are growing carload traffic through efficiencies
- The freight rail system is critical for large manufacturing
Rail Funding and Federal Grants

- Rail currently has no federal formula funding beyond grade crossing safety
- Competitive grant opportunities are provided through federal budget process
- NCDOT Rail has leveraged limited state funds to pursue federal grants

$270M

- Southeast Corridor S-Line Development: $47.5M
- Piedmont Rail Improvement and Modernization: $156.8M
- Piedmont Atlantic Intermodal Rail System: $34.5M
- Millbrook Road Grade Separation: $10M
- Blue Ridge Road Grade Separation: $19.9M

Nationally, the average federal grants available for passenger rail was $528M over the past four years.
Southeast Corridor Commission

- Six states and the District of Columbia
- Established to coordinate high performance rail system development south of D.C.

**Commission and Executive Leadership:**

**NC:** Julie White, Dep. Sec. of Multi-Modal Transportation, NCDOT **SEC Commission Chair**

**VA:** Jennifer Mitchell, Director, VDRPT **SEC Commission Vice-Chair**

**GA:** Meg Pirkle, Chief Engineer, GDOT **SEC Commission Secretary**

**DC:** Jeffrey Bennett, Assoc. Director, Transit Delivery Division, DDOT

**SC:** Brent Rewis, Dep. Sec. for Intermodal Planning, SCDOT

**FL:** Kevin Thibault, Secretary, FDOT

**TN:** Clay Bright, Commissioner, TDOT
Southeast Corridor: S-Line Development

Rail received grant to purchase S-Line Right-of-Way

$47.5M

- VA in process of acquiring Petersburg south
- NC in process of acquiring Ridgeway south
- Service development plan in process
- Closely coordinating with communities along the line for development opportunities
FTA TOD Planning Grant for the S-Line

- Opportunity for value capture in rural and urban areas
- 13 potential station study locations for TOD planning
- Community partners providing 100% of the non-federal match: $370K
  - Henderson: $30K
  - Franklinton: $30K
  - Wake Forest: $90K
  - Raleigh: $150K
  - Apex: $40K
  - Sanford: $30K

$900K
Charlotte Gateway Station
A Game-changing Project for the Region

• **Phase 1** supported through 2017 TIGER grant, STI, local funds and other federal funding
  – Phase 1 led by Rail Division; target completion: 2023
  – Includes all railroad infrastructure and platforms

• **Phase 2** Station and Multi-use Development
  – City leading with Gateway Partners LLC and NCDOT
Piedmont Corridor Service Enhancements

- 4th Piedmont round trip with Charlotte Station opening, anticipated 2024
- Evaluating commute-convenient departures
- Studying Greensboro to Cary improvements for 5th Piedmont round trip allowed under agreements with railroads
- Stations under development at Hillsborough, Lexington and Harrisburg
NC Passenger Rail Opportunities

- Existing Service
- Increased Service
- New Service

Map showing rail service opportunities in North Carolina, including connections to Washington, DC, and New York, NY, as well as routes to Atlanta, GA, Florida, and other major cities.
Rail Division at the Forefront of COVID Response

- Enhanced cleaning and social distancing at stations and onboard, face coverings required
- Carolinian trains 79 and 80 have consistently had best ridership recovery nationwide during pandemic

- Piedmont trains 73, 74, 75 and 76 have resumed regularly-scheduled service
- Trains 77, 78 resume service on April 5
- NC train service provides essential transportation to NC’s diverse population
Current Train Services

• Have returned service in accordance with ridership demand
• Capacity limited on trains to ensure social distancing
• More train frequencies allow passengers to spread out as demand returns
NC’s PRIME Rail Equipment Program

Total won from 2018 & 2019 FRA Grants
Will include the purchase of 6 locomotives & 26 coaches to support *Piedmont* passenger service

Rail Division putting finishing touches on RFP to go out Summer 2021

$156.8M
Benefits of New Equipment

- New equipment will allow NCDOT to benefit from industry-wide technological advancements
  - Much improved ride quality, improved air quality, touchless doors and advances in space, functionality and lighting
  - Technology at seats and information systems
Carolina Connector (CCX) Update

Rocky Mount

- Completion anticipated 3rd Quarter, 2021
- Last activity involves assembly and commissioning of cranes
- Opening will align with increasing intermodal volumes
- New intermodal options for Triangle and Eastern NC
- Partnering with CSX, Carolinas Gateway Partnership, NC Ports
Piedmont Atlantic Intermodal Rail System (PAIRS) Improvements

- CSX intermodal system improvements
- Connecting Wilmington, Charlotte, Atlanta and the CSX network
- Funded through 2019 FRA CRISI grant
Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Fund

- **Private Capital Investment** – **$594.2M**
- Supported **26** new industry expansion projects
- Created over **1,231** jobs
- Supported the growth of more than **50,000** rail carloads since 2014
- Upgraded **118.5** miles of short line railroad
- Modernized **111** bridges
- Improved **1,010** railroad crossings
- Removed **13** railroad crossings
- Invested **$5.8M** in NC Ports
Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Fund

- FRRCSI supports rail infrastructure health, safety and performance
- $16.7M in FY 2020 matching grant funds awarded to 17 short line railroads
  - Provides more than $32M in improvements statewide
  - Ensures state’s rail network can handle increased traffic and heavier railcars
- FY 2021 Project solicitation with partners underway
Rail Division STI Project Delivery

• Funded projects include:
  – Grade separations: 27 projects
  – Terminals: 3 projects
  – Track Improvements: 15 projects
  – Station-related: 3 projects

• Projects led by the Rail Division and closely coordinated with the Highway Divisions

$700M
Managed by Rail Division
Safety Innovations

Radar-based Vehicle Detection System

- Four-quadrant gates descend simultaneously
- Radar detects vehicles in crossing as gates descend
- Exit gates raise and lower to allow vehicle a clear path off the crossing
- Installed in Durham, Mebane, Burlington, Elon and Salisbury
Safety Innovations

Railroad Network Trespass Statewide Severity Assessment and Predictive Modeling

- Used thermal motion detection cameras
- 15,570 trespassers -- 721 days and 11 sites
- Info will used in education, supporting enforcement and providing engineering solutions to address the issue of trespassing on rail corridors

BeRailSafe continues follow-up investigations & analysis of all NC rail incidents and offers virtual and COVID-compliant rail safety training for public safety departments
Ongoing Safety initiatives

• Continuing to address safety at the state’s 3,493 public crossings
• 311 crossings closed since 1993

Ongoing Projects
– 20 Public grade crossings
– 8 Grade Separations underway
– 2 Traffic Separation Studies underway
– 49 Grade crossing warning device projects

• Continuing to inventory 1,200 crossings/yearly per FRA requirements
State Rail Plan Update

Defines future needs and priorities for investment in the statewide rail network

- FRA requirement
- Identifies $10B in rail network needs over next 10 years
- Includes long-term projects (beyond 10 years)
- Aligns State projects with Federal funding opportunities