



ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports sufficient and sustained funding for the maintenance of Amtrak and passenger rail, allowing for capital improvements and operations support to prevent service reductions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARTNERSHIPS

- Support the federal government partnership with local governments and regions on passenger rail and Amtrak issues.
- Engage directly with local elected officials, who understand the local needs, opportunities, and obligations through their “on-the-ground” perspective.

FUNDING

- Fully fund the passenger rail and Amtrak investments to meet the needs of localities and regions.
- Establish a dependable funding mechanism that ensures continuing broad-based nationwide passenger rail service.
- Ensure funding addresses both capital and operational needs of passenger rail and Amtrak.

PROGRAM

- Support nationwide passenger rail service.
- Support cooperative agreements between Amtrak and commuter rail systems.
- Recognize Amtrak and passenger rail’s contributions to the U.S. economy.
- Encourage economic development opportunities tied with Amtrak and passenger rail operations.
- Recognize and promote the environmentally-friendly and energy efficient benefits of Amtrak and passenger rail.
- Ensure equity and connectivity among transportation options – from transit and air to railways, roads, and waterways – as a means to reduce congestion, protect the environment, stimulate economic development, and achieve other objectives.
- Examine and denote Amtrak and nationwide passenger rail as a critical elements for redundancy in emergency planning and evacuations.

BACKGROUND

Passenger rail is a critical component of our country’s multi-modal transportation system. Amtrak provides a means of intercity transport for many populations and offers a viable alternative over taxed airlines and congested roadways. Further, Amtrak is the only intercity connection that many small and rural communities have. It serves 174 communities, mostly in rural areas, that are more than 75 miles from a large, medium, or small hub commercial airport, and 51 communities without intercity bus service. Passenger rail is also an extremely fuel efficient and environmentally friendly mode of transportation. This can help America achieve its goals in energy independence and improved environmental quality.

By federal law, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) direct the construction and maintenance of surface transportation infrastructure in urban areas with 50,000 people or more. MPOs and Councils of Government (COGs) perform comprehensive planning with substantial public input to support economic growth, environmental sustainability, and enhanced mobility for all. MPOs and COGs have a strong interest in maintaining a workable multi-modal transportation system to support regional planning and development initiatives.