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PRESS RELEASE



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**



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NNEPRA Board Moves Ahead with Brunswick Layover

PORTLAND, MAINE - The Board of Directors of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), during their monthly public meeting held today, took steps toward the development of an indoor train layover facility in Brunswick, including the decision to award the design/build contract to Consigli Construction Company of Portland, Maine. The Project, which is expected to cost approximately \$12 million, will provide jobs for Maine residents and income for Maine businesses. The layover will increase the frequency and efficiency of Downeaster service between Brunswick and Boston while setting the stage for future passenger rail improvements. The facility is expected to take up to 18 months to complete.

The Brunswick layover, which will be constructed on the rail yard property owned by NNEPRA between Church Road and Stanwood Street, will provide an enclosed facility to service trains during the day and overnight. Trains are currently serviced outdoors adjacent to the Portland Transportation Center on Thompson's Point. The new facility will provide a safer environment for workers while improving the efficiency and reliability of Downeaster operations. Once the Brunswick layover is complete, the Downeaster will make one additional daily round-trip between Brunswick and Boston without increasing the current frequency of train movements. Presently, trains travel between the Portland layover and Brunswick Station at the beginning and end of each day. The Brunswick layover will eliminate the need for trains to idle outside for hours each afternoon between runs, enabling them to be brought inside and shut down for proper servicing.

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The NNEPRA Board decided to develop a layover facility on Brunswick rail yard property in August 2011 following a site alternatives assessment conducted by consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB). The Assessment included the review of a number of other sites and ultimately concluded that the Rail Yard, which has operated as a rail yard since the 1860's and is currently zoned for railroad use, was the preferable location. NNEPRA and PB, in cooperation with the Brunswick Layover Advisory Group, developed facility and building design specifications to be used in the solicitation of a design/build contractor. The Advisory Group, which includes representatives from Amtrak, the Town of Brunswick, Brunswick residents, and the Maine Department of Transportation, was formed by the NNEPRA Board to address concerns expressed by Brunswick residents about negative impacts that the facility could have on the community. Consequently, the specifications called for the facility to be large enough to accommodate indoor servicing for three complete Downeaster trains sets plus additional locomotives, to include additional noise mitigation, and enhanced aesthetic features.

The design/build contractor selection process began in late January 2012 with a Request for Qualifications, and concluded in June 2012 with a public bid opening. Consigli Construction submitted the lowest of three bid proposals received, however the contract could not be awarded at that time because the cost of the facility exceeded available funding.

A new federal funding source which has recently become available to support the Downeaster now makes it possible for some of the federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds which were expected to be used for Downeaster operations to be redirected to the construction of the Brunswick layover. NNEPRA and the MaineDOT signed an agreement today formalizing that funding plan, and enabling the project to move forward.

Layover construction cannot begin until the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has made a final determination regarding the Brunswick layover under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NNEPRA has forwarded draft Environmental Assessment (EA) documentation to the FRA for review. Once the EA has been completed, it will be available for public review and comment before the FRA makes its final determination.

In the meantime, Consigli will begin to develop more detailed design plans for review by NNEPRA in late spring. The Advisory Group will have an opportunity to provide input prior to the approval of a final design. NNEPRA expects construction to begin later this year and hopes to be operating more Brunswick to Boston trains by the end of 2014.