

News Release

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Launch of the Delaware Third Track Construction Project

Wilmington – At a ceremony today, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) Secretary Shailen Bhatt announced the launch of the Delaware Third Track Construction Project. The project involves the addition of a third track along a 1.5-mile segment between Ragan and Brandy Interlockings on the Northeast Corridor, south of Wilmington near Banning Park. This will allow for more efficient movement and increased performance along the Corridor by commuter and intercity passenger trains. Joining Secretary Bhatt as speakers were U.S. Senators Thomas R. Carper and Chris Coons, U.S. Congressman John Carney, and Amtrak’s Stephen Gardner, Vice President of NEC Infrastructure & Investment Development.

Sec. Bhatt said, “This nearly \$53 million project represents funding from the Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Amtrak, and the State of Delaware. It’s a project that epitomizes how far we can go and how much we can accomplish when we have the public and private sector working together, and will provide a more efficient movement and better service along the Northeast Corridor by both commuter and intercity passenger trains.”

Project funding specifics:

Local Match (DelDOT)	\$10,180,619
FRA HSIPR Grant	13,300,000
FHWA	11,183,990
FTA	13,309,477
Amtrak	<u>5,000,000</u>
	\$52,974,086

In addition to a third track to correct a significant choke point on the Northeast Corridor, the project will upgrade infrastructure, rehabilitate two railroad bridges, and improve signals and communication apparatus in the area south of Wilmington.

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“We need to reaffirm the fact that infrastructure is a national priority by bringing our existing system to a state of good repair and by creating a more advanced system that meets today’s needs – and this project helps us do that,” said Sen. Carper. “The construction of a third track will help improve service over Amtrak’s 225 mile Northeast Corridor, facilitate the expansion of SEPTA service between Wilmington and Newark, decrease traffic congestion and harmful emissions from cars and trucks. Projects like this one that serve a good public purpose are what federal project dollars are all about.”

"Amtrak's Northeast Corridor carries millions of passengers a year, making it a vital economic engine for our entire region," Senator Coons said. "Adding a third track at what has been a critical choke point will allow commuter, high-speed passenger and freight trains to move passengers and products more efficiently. This kind of investment in our critical infrastructure is essential to our economy, and this project is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when we work together across silos."

“Investments in infrastructure are investments in our nation’s future,” said Congressman Carney. “Adding a third track and eliminating the choke point between Wilmington and Newark puts Delawareans to work, and makes rail a more convenient and efficient option for Amtrak and SEPTA riders. When this new track is completed, people from throughout our region will have even greater access to the tremendous businesses, attractions, and communities that Wilmington and Newark have to offer.”

“This project puts people to work and when it’s completed, will help commuters get to work,” said Governor Jack Markell. “The new track will improve connections for rail travelers and in doing so, improves our quality of life. It better positions Delaware as a great place to live, work and visit.”

“This project is a great example of the ongoing partnership we have with Delaware to improve the Northeast Corridor. This project will fix a small but important bottleneck that can delay trains today and must be addressed as part of a strategy to permit future Amtrak and DTC service growth south of Wilmington,” said Stephen Gardner, Amtrak vice president NEC Investment and Infrastructure Development.

When the Third Track Construction Project is completed in early 2015, Delaware Transit Corporation will be able to add more SEPTA train frequencies between Wilmington and Newark. The project will also benefit SEPTA, Amtrak’s Acela and Regional train performance and improve service efficiencies. Forecasts for growth in New Castle County compel DelDOT to look at alternatives to the busy I-95 corridor. Amtrak’s Northeast Rail Corridor parallels I-95 and offers the opportunity for commuters to use SEPTA trains instead of their personal vehicles to get to work, school and recreation.

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