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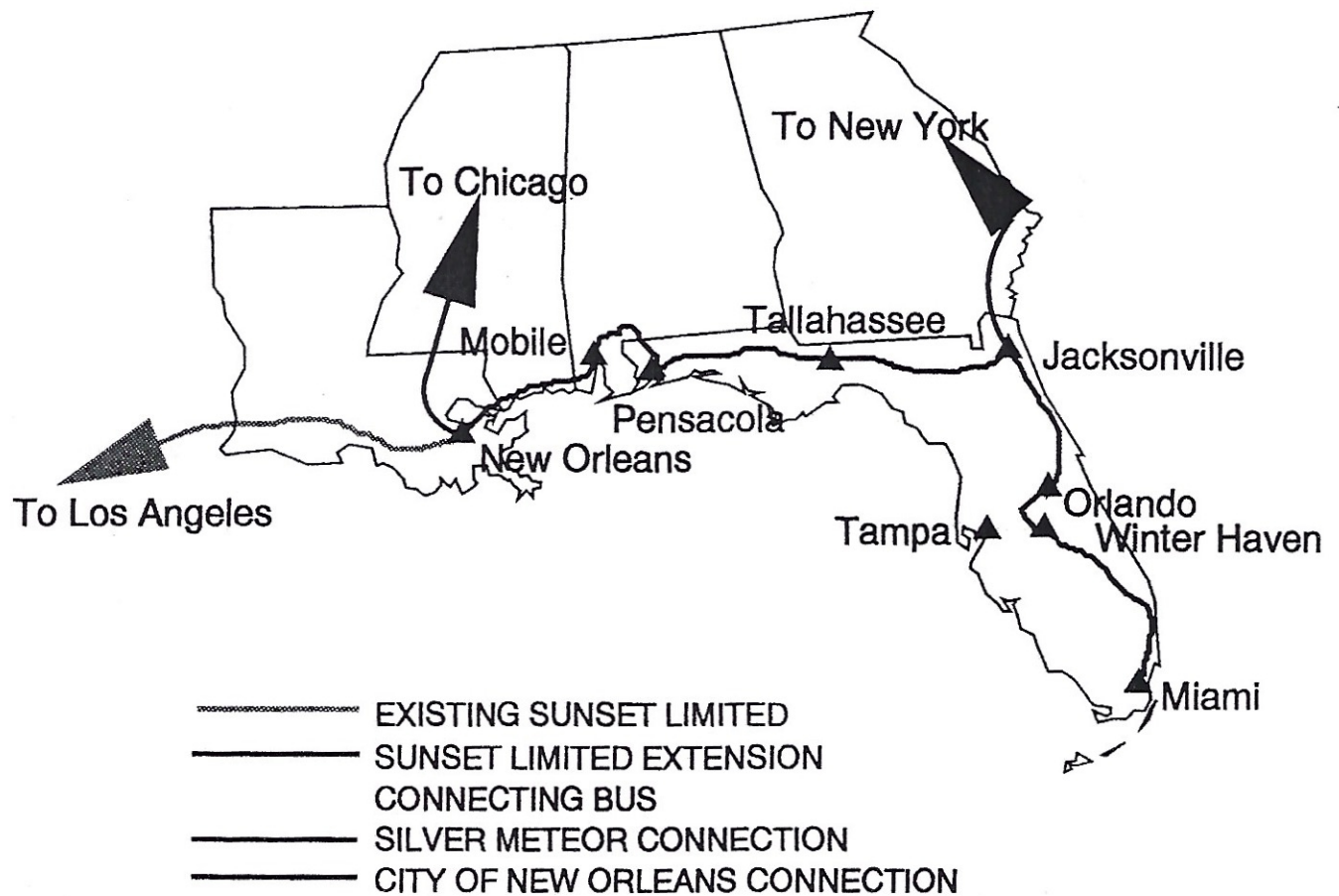
AN EVALUATION OF  
**SERVICE TO AREAS  
NOT PRESENTLY  
SERVED**

National Railroad Passenger Corporation



July 6, 1992

## 1993 SUNSET LIMITED EXTENSION



Displayed below is the schedule assumed for the second option, the tri-weekly extension of the Sunset Limited to Miami.

<u>READ DOWN</u>				<u>READ UP</u>		
Su, Tu, F	10:50p	dp	Los Angeles (PT)	ar	7:00a	W, F, M
Tu, Th, Su	7:50p	ar	New Orleans (CT)	dp	2:00p	M, W, Sa
Tu, Th, Su	8:50p	dp	New Orleans	ar	1:00p	M, W, Sa
W, F, M	3:40a	dp	Pensacola (CT)	dp	6:30a	M, W, Sa
W, F, M	12:55p	dp	Jacksonville (ET)	dp	11:15p	Su, Tu, F
W, F, M	9:40p	ar	Miami	dp	2:25p	Su, Tu, F

The same intermediate station stops were assumed for this option as for the daily New Orleans-Jacksonville option between New Orleans and Jacksonville. South of Jacksonville, the Sunset extension would serve all present Silver Meteor stops to Miami. Similar connections to those outlined above in the first option (i.e. City of New Orleans to Chicago, Silver Meteor to the Carolinas and New York) were assumed here as well.

The proposed consist for daily New Orleans-Jacksonville service was one diesel locomotive, one Superliner diner, one Superliner sleeper, one Superliner coach, and one Superliner baggage-coach. Two sets of equipment plus protect would be required and was estimated to cost \$22.8 million.



A tri-weekly extension of the Sunset Limited would require only one additional set of equipment for the five through-cars and one locomotive operating beyond New Orleans to Miami. The proposed consist for this service would be one diesel locomotive, one baggage car, two Superliner coaches, one Superliner diner, and one Superliner Sleeper. Total cost for the required equipment was estimated at \$11.8 million.

#### Subsidy Requirements and Performance Measures

Implementation of daily New Orleans-Jacksonville service was forecast to initially increase Amtrak's annual subsidy needs by \$6.1 million per year. Performance measures are shown below.

Passenger miles per train mile	91
Short-term profit(loss) per passenger mile	(\$0.100)

Extending the tri-weekly Sunset Limited to Miami was projected to require a first-year Federal subsidy increase of \$1.1 million, and post the following performance measures:



	Current LAX-NOL <u>Sunset</u>	Proposed LAX-MIA <u>Sunset</u>
Passenger miles per train mile	184	182
Short-term profit(loss) per passenger mile	(\$0.044)	(\$0.027)

### Track and Facility Conditions

Both options require operation over a segment of track not currently used for Amtrak service, the approximately 620 miles of CSX trackage between Jacksonville and New Orleans. Amtrak's Operating-Engineering Task Force inspected the line in November 1990.

The route is generally located in woodlands and bayous along the Gulf Coast. The track itself is primarily level, with some rolling terrain, moderate grades and curves, and long tangents. However, it is essentially a combination of two different types of rail operations.

The approximately 415 miles from Jacksonville to Flomaton, AL have moderate freight traffic primarily headed to and from New Orleans. Substantial amounts of chemicals are handled on these trains, and the track was extensively rehabilitated during the 1970's. Approximately 250 miles of the route are unsignalled, with traffic flows controlled by track

warrants. The absence of signals would limit passenger operations to 59 mph.

The approximately 205 miles between Flomaton and New Orleans link not only Jacksonville, but because of converging main lines, Birmingham, Atlanta, and points north, with New Orleans. Freight traffic is fairly heavy, with a substantial movement of chemicals and petroleum products. The line has a Traffic Control Signal System (TCS) and is well maintained.

Crossing signal circuits need to be lengthened, and signalling work needs to be done in CSX's Gentilly Yard, 11 miles east of New Orleans to permit expeditious rail passenger operations. Stations, platforms, lighting, and parking are required at all proposed stops with the exception of Mobile. Potable drinking water supply facilities for enroute equipment servicing, as well as a train and engine crew base are required at Pensacola. These capital costs were initially projected to total roughly \$13.2 million.

Additionally, local speed restrictions are particularly burdensome on this route. Relief from these would be necessary for the achievement of expeditious running times.

### Status Since Submission of Report to Congress

As a result of the substantial improvement forecast to result in the performance measures of the Sunset Limited, the relatively small increase in federal subsidy requirements, and the minimal equipment required to extend service to Miami, Amtrak plans to implement this extension effective with its April 1993 timetable change. The capital requirements outlined above are being jointly funded by the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Amtrak is working with the affected communities and CSX to lift local speed restrictions.



# AN EVALUATION OF SERVICE TO AREAS NOT PRESENTLY SERVED

## Executive Summary

### **Background and Assumptions**

Public Law 101-322, the Amtrak Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 1990, directed that the "National Railroad Passenger Corporation shall study the economic feasibility of providing new service, if such service will have the potential of covering the operating costs associated with such service, to areas not served by the Corporation as of the date of enactment of this Act."

While the legislative criteria specifies that the routes are to hold the potential for breaking even, this potential could not be determined prior to estimating the possible revenues and operating costs the routes might generate. Therefore, routes were selected for evaluation that are frequently cited as desirable links in Amtrak's national network, or would link major population areas with important regional centers, major tourist attractions, state capitals, etc, that currently have no Amtrak service, or have other characteristics that are typical of Amtrak's more successful existing services. Additionally, an attempt was made to achieve geographic balance in the analysis.

Passenger revenue forecasts were modelled using detailed market-specific data, taking into consideration the population of the markets served, the travel time and mileage between trip origin and destination, the frequency of service, and the time of day each market is served. Additionally, each of the evaluated routes was reviewed for its potential for U.S. Postal Service contracts. For those routes which connect markets which, in Amtrak's estimation, hold the potential for a U. S. Postal service contract for mail carriage, subsidy requirements and performance measures reflect the inclusion of estimated mail revenue.

All operating costs developed for purposes of this evaluation are based on current labor contracts and practices. They are estimated in FY92 dollars, and reflect the incremental costs that would be incurred if the evaluated services were to be implemented. The following types of costs are included: train and engine crews; train fuel and power; railroad costs; equipment maintenance; maintenance of way; on-board services; stations; sales and marketing; insurance; and general support.

Given the number of routes considered, this evaluation focuses on indicating an order of magnitude of the expected financial results of the routes considered. Some of the routes selected would operate over track segments that Amtrak has not inspected or evaluated as to their suitability for expedited passenger service. Significantly different schedules than those used for planning purposes might be necessary, and would impact both revenues and operating costs. Implementing any one of these services would require a more detailed evaluation than provided in this overview to determine with greater precision the capital costs for initiating service, the achievable schedules, and the expected revenues and operating costs.



## Routes Newly Evaluated

- **Vancouver-Seattle-Los Angeles** - This service would provide a second frequency between Los Angeles and Seattle along the route of the Coast Starlight, and would also extend this route to Vancouver, BC. Ten locomotives and 40 cars would be required for this service, including protect requirements.
- **Vancouver-Portland** - As a variation on providing service to Vancouver, Amtrak also evaluated operating a short distance service between Vancouver and Portland. This service would capitalize on the regional affinities of Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver. Three locomotives and five cars, which includes protect requirements, would need to be purchased for this service.
- **Seattle-Fargo-(Chicago) via Southern Montana and North Dakota** - A southern leg of the Empire Builder would operate as a combined service with the Empire Builder east of Fargo, ND. At Fargo, the Portland leg of the Empire Builder would continue on its present route via Minot, Havre, Glacier Park, and Sandpoint to Spokane and on to Portland. The southern leg would proceed via Bismarck, Billings, and Helena to Spokane, where the train would pick up a through-coach from the northern section of the Builder before proceeding along the Empire Builder's present route to Seattle. Through redeployment of equipment currently operating on the Empire Builder, only three locomotives and seven cars would need to be purchased for this service.
- **Denver-Spokane-(Portland/Seattle)** - As a variation on southern Montana service, Amtrak also evaluated service between Denver and Spokane. Under this scenario, service would operate from Denver via Cheyenne, Casper, Laurel (Billings), Helena, and Missoula to Spokane. Ten locomotives and twenty cars, including protect, are required for this service.
- **Denver-Dallas via Oklahoma** - Presently Amtrak has no north-south routes between the Chicago-New Orleans City of New Orleans and the Seattle-Los Angeles Coast Starlight. A Denver-Dallas route would for the first time connect Texas (via a cross-platform connection at Denver) to the Northwest in a north-south pattern, as well as restore service to Oklahoma. Including protect requirements, 4 locomotives and 23 cars would be required to establish this service.
- **Minneapolis-Kansas City** - Service between Minneapolis and Kansas City via Des Moines would directly tie in the growing populations of Minneapolis and St. Paul with Amtrak's popular long distance services through direct connection at Chariton, Iowa to the California Zephyr and at Kansas City to the Southwest Chief. Backtracking to Chicago from Minneapolis/St. Paul would no longer be required to connect to these trains. The route would add Des Moines, Iowa's state capital, to the list of cities served by Amtrak. Three locomotives and nine cars would be required for this service.



- Extension of the St. Louis/Kansas City Mules to Omaha - Amtrak's St. Louis/Kansas City Mules operate between St. Louis and Kansas City as a daily, state-subsidized round-trip. Extension of this service to Omaha would, besides providing direct service between Omaha and St. Louis, directly connect the major population centers of St. Louis and Kansas City with Denver, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Portland, Seattle, and Oakland/San Francisco via cross-platform connections to the California Zephyr at Omaha. One locomotive and six cars would be required to extend service to Omaha.
- Chicago-Green Bay - An extension of Amtrak's Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha service to Green Bay would serve an economically active corridor of communities that form Wisconsin's second largest market, including Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Neenah, Menasha, Appleton, and Green Bay. Two of Amtrak's present Chicago-Milwaukee round-trips would be extended to Green Bay. Additionally, another Chicago-Milwaukee round-trip would be added to Amtrak's present schedule pattern in that corridor to facilitate equipment turns. One locomotive and three cars would be required for this service.
- Chicago-Madison - Amtrak also evaluated extending two Chicago-Milwaukee round-trips to Madison, Wisconsin's state capital. This service would connect Madison with Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee, and with Chicago. One locomotive and three cars would be required for this service.
- New York-Harrisburg via Bethlehem - Amtrak presently provides service between New York and Harrisburg as part of its Northeast Corridor operations. By operating service over this route, however, Amtrak misses three major population centers in eastern Pennsylvania: Bethlehem, Allentown, and Reading. The service evaluated for this report would link these population centers with New York and with Amtrak's national system via Harrisburg. One locomotive and three cars would be required for this service.
- Extension of the Lake Shore Limited to Cincinnati - An extension of Amtrak's New York/Boston-Chicago Lake Shore Limited would connect the three largest communities in Ohio, Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, as well as provide through-service from upstate New York and New York City to Columbus and Cincinnati. Three locomotives and 17 cars would be required to operate this service.
- New York-Atlanta via Tennessee - This route would connect major Northeast cities with Atlanta through the western Virginia communities of Charlottesville, Lynchburg, and Roanoke, as well as the eastern Tennessee cities of Knoxville and Chattanooga. Five locomotives and 23 cars would be required for this service.
- Restructured Silver Service - Amtrak's New York-Miami/Tampa Silver Star and



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- Restructured Silver Service - Amtrak's New York-Miami/Tampa Silver Star and



Silver Meteor are two of its most popular long-distance trains. For purposes of this evaluation, Amtrak examined adding a third Silver train, operating via Charlotte and western North Carolina, in conjunction with some changes to the routes of the Silver Meteor and the Silver Star, providing Amtrak service for the first time to the beach resorts north of Palm Beach. Nine locomotives and 67 cars would be required for this service.

### Routes Previously Evaluated

- **Jacksonville-New Orleans** - This route has often been referred to as the "missing link" in the Amtrak system because, if operated, it would join the sunbelt cities of Los Angeles, Phoenix, Tucson, El Paso, San Antonio, and Houston with major Florida markets through New Orleans. In a 1991 joint FRA/Amtrak report to Congress, it was projected that daily Jacksonville-New Orleans service would require two locomotives and six cars. A tri-weekly extension of the Sunset Limited to Miami would require one locomotive and five cars. Because of the substantial improvement in the performance measures of the Sunset Limited and the relatively small increase in federal subsidy requirements to extend service to Miami, Amtrak plans to implement this extension effective with its April 1993 timetable change. Equipment for this extension will be obtained through a minor redeployment of the current fleet. Capital requirements are being jointly funded by the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.
- **Rerouting the Pioneer and Desert Wind Through Central Iowa and Southern Wyoming** - Public Law 101-322, the Amtrak Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 1990, directed Amtrak to "conduct a study to evaluate the short-term and long-term revenue and cost implications of separating the existing California Zephyr-Desert Wind-Pioneer train into two service routes serving separate western destinations via a southern route and a central route through Iowa." Amtrak submitted its report to Congress in response to this directive in January 1991. Two locomotives and 53 cars would be required for separate operation.

As part of its conclusion in the original Congressional report, Amtrak recommended that the states of Iowa and Illinois explore operation of a 403(b) service between Chicago and Omaha. Iowa's legislature passed a bill subsequently mandating that service over the central Iowa route be further evaluated. In June 1991, the Pioneer was extended as an independent train to Denver, thus restoring Amtrak service to Wyoming. Presently, the Pioneer splits from and joins with the combined train at Denver, while the Desert Wind and the California Zephyr split and combine in Salt Lake City.

- **Chicago-Dallas via Oklahoma** - Senate Report 101-121, accompanying the Senate FY 1990 Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, directed Amtrak to report on the impediments to reinstitution of Amtrak service through Oklahoma.



Amtrak submitted its report in April 1990 and upon request reevaluated the service in August 1991. Restoration of the Chicago-Dallas Texas Chief was evaluated as a daily operation and as a tri-weekly operation, running as part of the Southwest Chief between Chicago and Newton, KS. To operate daily service, 5 locomotives and 20 cars would be required. Tri-weekly service would require 3 locomotives and 14 cars.

Amtrak has agreed to provide the passenger equipment necessary to operate the Texas Chief at least tri-weekly when new Superliner passenger cars become available if the state of Oklahoma would share the operating losses of such a service under a 403(b) program.

- **Chicago-Florida** - Senate Report 101-121, Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 1990, directed Amtrak to evaluate by December 1, 1990, the feasibility of resuming rail passenger service to Jacksonville, Florida from Chicago, via Atlanta, Georgia and other cities. Amtrak submitted its report dated December 1, 1990 in response to that request. Ten locomotives and fifty cars would be required for this service.

While there has been no Congressional action towards implementation of this route since submission of Amtrak's report to Congress, local interest remains strong. Several of the states along the route are attempting to form an interstate compact in order to facilitate funding this service under a joint 403(b) contract.

- **Boston-Portland Service** - Congress, during Senate consideration of the 1991 Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, requested Amtrak to prepare a financial evaluation of initiating multiple frequency service between Boston and Portland, Maine. Amtrak submitted its report in response to these requests on June 1, 1991. The proposed service would operate from Boston North Station and proceed via Exeter and Dover, NH and Saco/Biddeford, ME to Portland. Three locomotives and ten cars would be required to implement this service.

The State of Maine has decided to sponsor this service, sharing financial responsibility for any operating losses with Amtrak under a Section 403(b) arrangement. Funding of \$30 million was earmarked for the State of Maine in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 to make the necessary right-of-way improvements. Amtrak has agreed to provide the necessary equipment.

## **Equipment Requirements**

The table below lists, in order of total estimated equipment cost, the capital investment that would be required for equipment to initiate the services discussed in this report. In addition to the capital required for equipment, implementation of any of these



services would also require substantial capital investment for track and facility improvements.

Service	Total Estimated Equipment Cost
New York-Harrisburg	\$5,519,000
Chicago-Green Bay	\$6,009,000
Chicago-Madison	\$6,009,000
Extension of the St. Louis/Kansas City Mule	\$7,477,000
Extension of the Sunset Limited to Miami	\$11,847,000
Minneapolis-Kansas City	\$14,886,000
Vancouver-Portland, OR	\$15,910,000
Boston-Portland, ME	\$19,000,000
Southern Montana Leg of the Empire Builder	\$19,394,000
Daily Jacksonville-New Orleans Service	\$22,795,000
Extension of the Lake Shore Limited to Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati	\$33,211,000
Tri-Weekly Texas Chief Service Between Chicago and Dallas via Oklahoma	\$33,661,000
Daily Texas Chief Service Between Chicago and Dallas via Oklahoma	\$50,295,000
Denver-Dallas via Oklahoma	\$54,850,000
New York-Atlanta via Tennessee	\$60,022,000
Denver-Spokane via Southern Montana	\$78,487,000
Vancouver-Los Angeles	\$101,850,000
Reroute of the Pioneer/Desert Wind via Central Iowa and Southern Wyoming	\$136,900,000- \$158,700,000
Chicago-Florida	\$150,200,000- \$174,400,000
Restructured Silver Service	\$169,042,000

## Financial Results and Conclusion

The tables below list the routes discussed in this report, in order of initial annual federal subsidy required, and their related performance measures.

Passenger miles per train mile (PM/TM) is a volume indicator, and represents the number of passengers on board a train for every mile the train travels.

Short-term avoidable profit (loss) per passenger mile (STAP(L)/PM) represents the short-term avoidable profit or loss of the train divided by the number of passenger miles generated. Expressed in cents, this ratio expresses the efficiency of the service in providing rail transportation.

Short Distance Service	Incremental Subsidy (000's)	PM/TM	STAP(L)/PM
Minneapolis-Kansas City (1)	(\$835)-\$926	39-59	(\$0.148)-(\$0.065)
Extension of the St. Louis/Kansas City Mule (1) (2)	(\$993)-\$14	84-94	(\$0.041)-(\$0.028)
New York-Harrisburg	(\$1,110)-(\$860)	87-102	(\$0.050)-(\$0.022)
Chicago-Madison (1)	(\$1,534)-(\$605)	55-83	(\$0.140)-(\$0.049)
Chicago-Green Bay (1)	(\$2,679)-(\$1,687)	43-64	(\$0.219)-(\$0.101)
Vancouver-Portland	(\$2,961)-(\$2,626)	82-101	(\$0.100)-(\$0.067)
Boston-Portland	(\$3,388)	54	(\$0.175)

Long Distance Service	Incremental Subsidy (000's)	PM/TM	STAP(L)/PM
Extension of the Sunset Limited to Miami (2)	(\$1,119)	182	(\$0.027)
Extension of the Lake Shore Limited to Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati (2)	(\$2,373)	233	\$0.006
Tri-Weekly Texas Chief Service Between Chicago and Dallas via Oklahoma	(\$3,285)	282	(\$0.039)
Daily Jacksonville-New Orleans Service	(\$6,099)	91	(\$0.100)



Daily Texas Chief Service Between Chicago and Dallas via Oklahoma	(\$8,443)	153	(\$0.103)
New York-Atlanta via Tennessee	(\$9,624)-(\$7,896)	62-72	(\$0.142)-(\$0.080)
Denver-Dallas via Oklahoma	(\$11,502)-(\$8,292)	94-156	(\$0.111)-(\$0.037)
Vancouver-Los Angeles	(\$12,848)-(\$8,208)	205-250	(\$0.016)-\$0.004
Reroute of the Pioneer/Desert Wind via Central Iowa and Southern Wyoming (2) (4)	(\$14,171)	182	(\$0.006)
Southern Montana Leg of the Empire Builder (2)	(\$15,352)-(\$12,632)	152-163	(\$0.042)-(\$0.033)
Restructured Silver Service (2) (3)	(\$20,250)-(\$10,644)	276-307	\$0.000-\$0.009
Chicago-Florida	(\$20,800)-(\$18,000)	131-194	(\$0.087)-(\$0.041)
Denver-Spokane via Southern Montana	(\$24,377)-(\$22,619)	49-73	(\$0.406)-(\$0.243)

- (1) Annual subsidy amounts include the impact of connecting revenue to/from other trains. PM/TM and STAP(L)/PM are for the local service only, and do not reflect connecting ridership on other services.
- (2) Performance measures (PM/TM and STAP(L)/PM) reflect the resulting performance of total route: i.e. existing Amtrak service on this route plus the impact of the route change evaluated. Subsidy shown is only for the incremental annual subsidy resulting from the service change.
- (3) Figures reflect the net change in result for all three trains: Silver Star, Silver Meteor, and New York-Florida via Charlottesville.
- (4) Figures reflect the net change in result for all three trains: California Zephyr, Desert Wind, and Pioneer.

While the routes evaluated would serve a clear social purpose, in that they would provide transportation alternatives to, in many cases, areas with limited and declining choices, they nonetheless would require operating subsidies as well as major investments in capital for equipment and for track and facility improvements.



Implementation of the routes evaluated in this report would represent a major expansion of Amtrak's system, reaching new metropolitan areas with over 11 million residents currently without Amtrak service. Amtrak cannot, however, given its scarcity of capital for both rolling stock and track and facilities improvements, and the operating subsidies initially required, presently consider implementing such a route expansion on its own.