## WHAT IS RER? (Regional Express Rail)





Regional rail service that operates more frequently and at lower fares than commuter rail but utilizes existing and conventional railroad infrastructure and equipment at a lower capital cost than new heavy or light rail metro routes

#### **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:**

- Frequent Service
- Low Fares & Proof Of Payment (POP)
- Run-Through Downtown Infrastructure
- Electrification
- Minimal Operating Personnel
- Level Platform Boarding

## WHAT IT ISN'T



A trendsetting alternative rock band from Athens, Ga.



Rapid Eye Movement

Paris' Reseau Express Regional (RER) network developed in the late 1960s and expanded since defines the concept, although Berlin's S-Bahn operates using a similar structure, as do others around the world.



## Frequent & Reliable Service

Bi-directional service every 15 minutes or better, at least 18 hours every day of the week. Operates often enough that a schedule isn't needed. Reliability is requisite. When possible, clockface schedules are preferred.

## Barrier || ||

Operating Cost & Rail Ownership -More service costs more money. It also produces positive societal outcomes, including economic development and activity, along with access to jobs and healthcare.



#### Low Fares & **Proof of Payment**

Equivalent of rail transit fares in the same market, usually no more than \$5 for a one-way trip, purchased offvehicle at station vending machines or multiple-ride passes. Usually administered in fare zones using Proof of Payment (PoP) to limit fare evasion.



Operating Budget (Perceptual) - Belief that fare revenue will be too minimal in relation to operating costs. RER proponents argue international examples demonstrate same or better revenue through substantially greater ridership volume.



## **Run-Through**

Downtowns are not the best place to terminate trains. Changing directions takes up valuable time and space with additional tracks. Run-through infrastructure requires a tunnel or elevated structures.

## **Barrier**



Capital Cost - New tunnels or elevation are expensive to install in city centers, although they become valuable longterm assets.



## **Electrification**

Since the early 1900s, the most efficient and environmentally-friendly equipment for passenger rail is electric multiple units (EMUs). In addition to superior acceleration and braking over locomotive-hauled trainsets, they also offer greater passenger capacity, avoiding a locomotive that carries no paying customers.

## Barrier ""

<u>Capital Cost</u> – Like tunnels and bridges, introducing overhead wires, catenary structures and power substations require up-front investment, although many industry observers note much of that expense is offset by long-term savings in operating expenses.



## **Minimal Operating**

With PoP, conductors are not needed on every train to inspect or collect tickets. Additionally, level boarding avoids the need to toggle boarding areas between high- and low-floor entry equipment. Savings on labor costs improve operating budgets to make frequent service possible, although conductors on existing operations are often retained as train operators, avoiding job displacement.

## Barrier

Political Opposition & Regulations -While substantial job losses can be avoided, labor unions have often opposed the shift from conductor-staffed trains to PoP inspectors. Accordingly, politicians supported by unions may resist these changes. Additionally, federal, state and/or local regulations (or interpretations thereof) may only permit operations using conductors in some cases.



## Level Platform Boarding

Passengers – especially those with disabilities – board and alight from trains faster and easier when they don't need to navigate stairs to enter the railcar. This improves schedule adherence and quality of experience, making RÉR service more attractive to additional riders.

Capital Cost, Freight Clearance & Sunk Costs – If high-platform vehicles are needed, station platforms often need to be raised, usually at significant cost. Also, most freight railroads prohibit high platforms on lines they own due to clearance concerns. Finally, systems that have recently purchased railcar fleets with steps will be hesitant to replace them.

# ACHIEVING RER

## NORTH AMERICAN RER STATUS REPORT



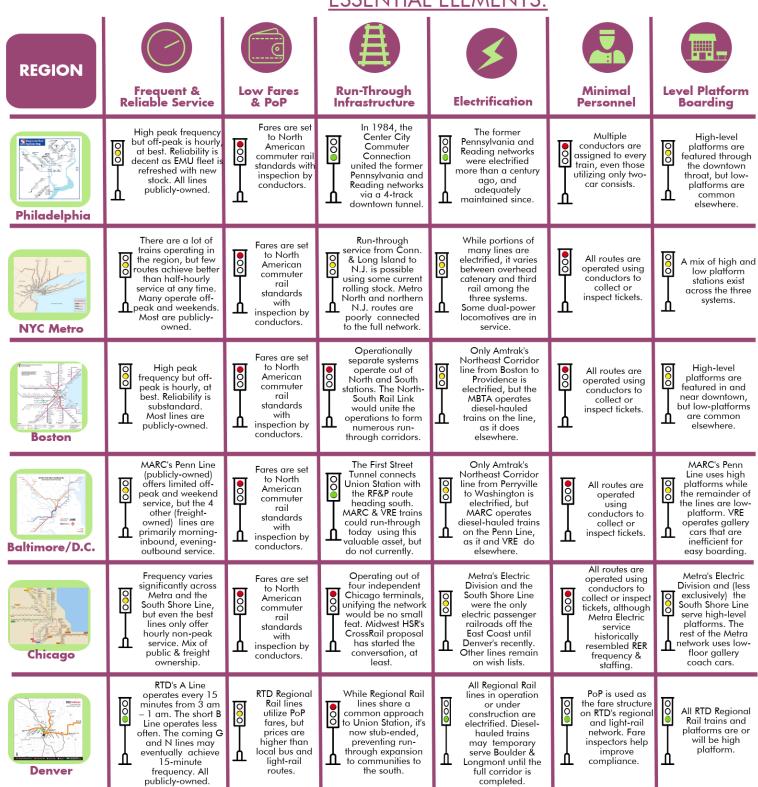


All or nearly all elements in place



No region in North America currently operates a fully-realized Regional Express Rail (RER) network. This chart provide an overview of the comparative status of North American commuter rail systems that could establish a RER network that matches the best international examples.

## **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:**



# ACHIEVING RER



Few, if any, elements in place

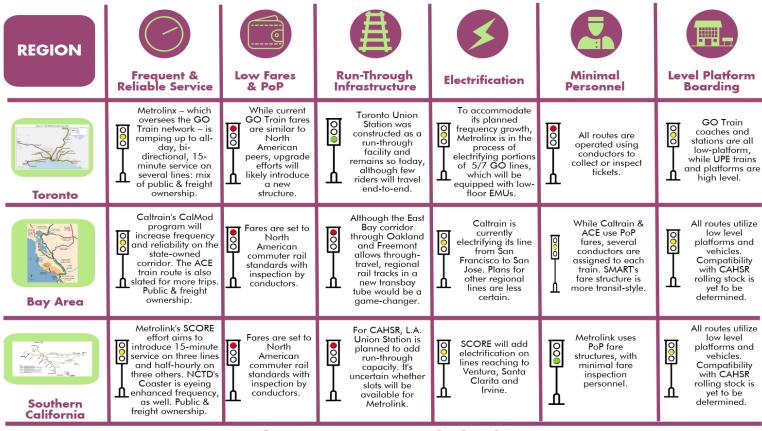


All or nearly all elements in place



No region in North America currently operates a fully-realized Regional Express Rail (RER) network. This chart provide a general overview on the comparative status of North American commuter rail systems that could establish a RER network that matches the best international examples.

#### **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:**



## POTENTIAL RER REGIONS

These regions currently have scant or non-existent commuter rail operations with assets or conditions favorable to hosting RER networks if the right political dynamics came together...



Dallas-Ft. Worth

Quietly, the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex already is assembling pieces of a regional rail network via the already-operating Dallas-Fort Worth Trinity Railway Express (TRE) and Denton-Carrollton A-Train, along with the soon-to-launch Ft. Worth-DFW Airport TEX Rail. The problem is they're all operated independently. Meanwhile, the North Central Texas COG has plans on the books for a half-dozen other regional rail lines. Some strategy to unite it is urgently needed.



**Twin Cities** 

With the potential for routes radiating from two downtown stations (St. Paul's historic Union Depot and Minneapolis' modern Target Field Station), the Twin Cities could build on its existing Minneapolis-Big Lake North Star service on a mix of busy, lightly-used and abandoned rail corridors. The long-promised North Star extension to St. Cloud is a priority, as is intercity service to Duluth, and a connection to rapidly-growing Rochester is desired.



Atlanta

Atlanta owes its existence to railroading, as the city grew around a spot where five southern railroads came together (known then as Atlantica-Pacifica). Today, those same rail lines are still thriving freight routes, which also presents the chief obstacle to RER service in the ATL. If regional trail trains could operate on or alongside these corridors, good run-through trackage exists downtown to connect outlying communities. Funding has been approved for an initial line from MARTA's East Point station to Lovejoy.



**Pittsburgh** 

The Pittsburgh region is laden with rail lines and abandoned corridors that once delivered the coal and ore needed for the Steel City's most famous export. As coal traffic dwindles, new capacity for passenger rail may open up. Dozens of mature towns and small cities are tucked along the region's riverbanks and valleys that could supplement the existing light-rail and busway networks that already serve downtown. However, the lack of connections between previously competing railroads could make run-through operations tricky.



Kansas City

A plethora of rail corridors spans out from Kansas City in all directions, but most still carry heavy freight loads. In particular, the Kansas City Terminal Railroad corridor – which serves the city's impressive Union Station – is currently maxed-out with traffic, a major impediment to a regional rail network. The former Rock Island Railroad corridor from the Chiefs' and Royals' stadiums through Raytown to Lee's Summit could see passenger service within the next decade.



Houston

While Los Angeles is often perceived as the nation's most auto-dominated area, the development of its Metrolink regional rail system has left Houston as the largest metropolitan region without any regional rail routes (it does feature a limited light-rail network). Some momentum exists for the so-called 90A route from Missouri City to the southern terminus of the Red Line. Other natural regional corridors were overtaken by highways years ago, especially the former Katy line. Reliable and frequent regional rail could provide a meaningful alternative to the region's congested thruways. Galveston would be an obvious priority for such a system.