



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, Public Law 115-336

December 2020 Report

21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act

Report to Congress on Modernizing Agency Websites and Digital Services

As required by sections 3(b)(2) and 3(d) of Public Law 115-336,¹ the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA), this report provides information with respect to the websites and digital services operated by the Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) that have been prioritized for modernization as well as a targeted completion schedule and associated cost estimates.

The STB has one main website, www.stb.gov, through which all public STB digital information and services are made available. When necessary, in support of the Board's environmental review process, a third-party contractor may create a Board-sponsored website for a particular project requiring review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). At this time, the Board has two such websites, www.uintabasinrailwayeis.com and www.newenglandtransraileis.com. The contractor-maintained websites are accessible during a project's NEPA review process.

The Board launched a redesigned website in November 2019, which was the result of a multi-year modernization effort. In modernizing its website, the Board has worked to ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that it has complied with the 21st Century IDEA, as further discussed below.

During 2020, the Board's website improvement efforts focused largely on strengthening the security posture of the website. In support of that effort, the STB improved the architecture of the website and migrated data out of its legacy system, Lotus Notes. By migrating out of the legacy environment, the STB was able to ensure that the new tools developed to manage the website content are intuitive and secure. Due to that important security focus, certain prior modernization action targets have been adjusted. The Board's ongoing modernization efforts include:

- Finalizing the conversion of the website from an industry standard secure connection through an on-premise infrastructure to an industry standard use of cloud-based web services. This conversion is expected to be completed by April 30, 2021, and there are no additional costs associated with this effort.
- Ensuring website accessibility to individuals with disabilities, in accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 508). The Board's website team has identified certain accessibility issues and is working to remediate them by April 30, 2021. The estimated cost of this remediation is \$30,000.00.

¹ 132 Stat. 5025-5028.

- Ensuring that use of the website on mobile devices is seamless, easily navigable, and section 508 compliant. While the website has an improved appearance on mobile devices, with all website data available, additional improvement is needed. It is expected that these improvements will be completed by September 30, 2021. The estimated cost of improving the mobile capabilities is \$37,000.00.
- Integrating the third-party managed environmental websites, noted above, into the STB website architecture. The target completion date to integrate third-party managed environmental websites is September 30, 2022. The estimated cost of this action item is \$115,000.00.

The Board's website modernization and improvement efforts align with the goals of the 21st Century IDEA. The Board's progress in meeting those goals is outlined below:

Section 3(a)(1)

The Board is working to ensure that the website is section 508 compliant, as noted above.

Section 3(a)(2)

The STB's website is consistent in appearance across pages. The Board has created a design standard to ensure that any future changes to the website continue to be consistent in appearance.

Section 3(a)(3)

The STB's website does not overlap with any legacy websites. Some functionality from the old website is available in the new website while replacement functionality is being developed. However, users attempting to access the legacy site are automatically directed to the current website.

Section 3(a)(4)

The STB's website contains two search features; one searches the website and one searches STB records. These search functions are more robust than what had been available on the Board's legacy website, and the Board is continuing to refine and improve these search tools.

Section 3(a)(5)

Access to the STB's website is provided through an industry standard secure connection. Presently, that connection is accomplished through on-premise infrastructure. However, the Board is in the process of migrating to a cloud-based web services solution.

Section 3(a)(6)

The STB's website is designed around user needs, seeking to make Board decisions, filings, reports, data, and other information accessible and easy to find. Feedback is logged and is used to continuously improve website functionality. The Board relies on Google Analytics to track items such as traffic to pages, browsers used, and paths used to access website content

so that the STB can perform data-driven analysis to guide development decisions.

Section 3(a)(7)

The Board has sought to provide users an enhanced digital experience through an improved electronic filing process, payments through Pay.gov, and electronic service of documents.

Section 3(a)(8)

As noted above, the website is accessible on common mobile devices, and the Board intends to continue to improve its mobile compatibility going forward.

Section 4(d)

The Board provides forms related to serving the public in a digital format.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this status report on the Board's website modernization efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me or Rachel Campbell, the Board's Managing Director, at 202-245-0357.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann Begeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ann Begeman
Chairman