

The Surface Transportation Board is in the process of rescinding or revising reports, tools, files and other agency materials in accordance with Executive Order 14151 [Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#), Executive Order 14168 [Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#), and related guidance. Chairman Fuchs dissented from this Strategic Plan, and he does not plan to evaluate the agency's progress or performance on the Strategic Plan's fourth strategic goal. The Board is in the process of updating its strategic plan.



Surface Transportation Board

Strategic Plan

FISCAL YEARS 2022-2026

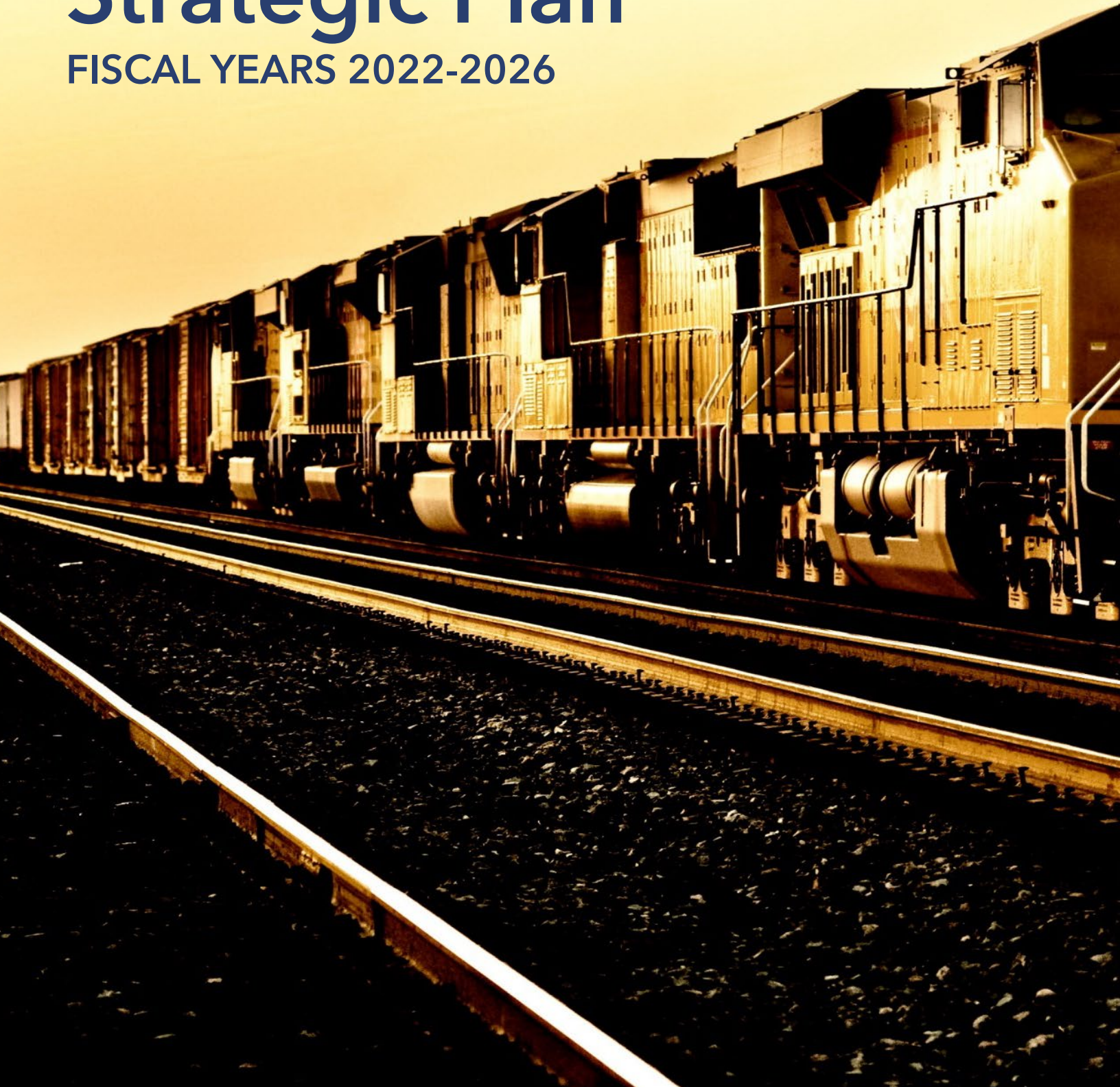


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Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423

Message from the Chairman

I am pleased to share our Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022 to 2026. This Strategic Plan serves to modernize the STB's Mission and Vision for the next four years while energizing our workforce, rail carriers, rail network users, and the public. Through the Strategic Planning process, we have identified our Goals and Objectives, and developed actionable Strategies to achieve these Objectives in the near-term future.

This is our second Strategic Plan after our establishment as an agency independent of the Department of Transportation. This Strategic Plan differs from our FY18-22 Strategic Plan in a few key ways. For example, our public interest-related Strategic Goal (Goal 1) stresses the importance of freight network reliability in ever-changing (and often challenging) economic circumstances; our service-related Strategic Goal (Goal 2) newly emphasizes the common carrier obligation, enhanced competition, and oversight of passenger rail service; our regulatory process-related Strategic Goal (Goal 3) highlights the availability of informal—as well as formal—dispute resolution at the Board; and the management-related Strategic Goal (Goal 4) has shifted toward a focus on diversity in the workforce and encouraging leadership at all levels as our agency matures.

In the spirit of encouraging leadership at all levels, I am proud to say that the entire agency was invited to provide feedback in the Strategic Planning process for the FY22-26 Strategic Plan. We solicited feedback through an anonymous agency-wide survey to receive input on the Strategic Plan's Mission, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, and on the challenges our workforce anticipates facing in the coming years. With this feedback, our Office Directors and selected STB employees of all levels workshopped the Mission, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. Thematically, you will also see that the Strategic Plan embeds topics of growing importance to our workforce, our Offices, shippers and carriers, and the public – topics such as competition / service (Goals 1 and 2), the environment (Goals 1 and 3), data (Goals 3 and 4), and diversity (Goal 4).

At the STB, we are proud to share this Strategic Plan that conveys our deep commitment to public service, competition in the surface transportation network, transparency, and impartiality. My colleagues and I look forward to driving progress toward our Mission over the next four years.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Martin J. Oberman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martin" being the most prominent.

Martin J. Oberman

Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board

Section I: About the Surface Transportation Board

The Surface Transportation Board (STB or Board) is primarily charged with the economic oversight of the nation's freight rail system. The Board has regulatory jurisdiction over the reasonableness of railroad rates and practices, and over mergers, line acquisitions, new rail line construction, abandonments of existing rail lines, rail service issues, and certain matters regarding Amtrak. The Board is charged with providing an efficient and effective forum for the resolution of disputes and other matters within its jurisdiction. The Board favors private-sector negotiations and resolutions and takes other actions in the public interest as necessary.

Our Mission

The Surface Transportation Board is an independent economic regulatory agency that seeks to promote a balanced, competitive, and responsive surface transportation system, primarily the interstate rail network, and addresses the needs of the network for the benefit of the general public.

Our Vision

Strive to be an adaptable, diverse, and highly skilled workforce that serves the nation by advancing the public interest in transportation-related matters as an innovative, accessible, transparent, and impartial forum.

What We Do

In carrying out its mission, the STB engages in a variety of activities on a day-to-day basis. With regard to formal proceedings, the Board processes legal filings; conducts the appropriate economic, environmental, and legal analysis; researches and prepares draft decisions; conducts a voting process; issues decisions; and defends agency actions that are challenged in court.

Outside of formal proceedings, the Board facilitates informal dispute resolution and works with governmental entities, the public, and the media to provide information about the agency and its processes. The Board also collects and analyzes service-related, economic, and financial data, producing studies and analytical tools that are useful to both the agency and the public at large. As an independent agency, Board employees also handle important administrative functions, including information technology and security, facilities, and human resources.

History

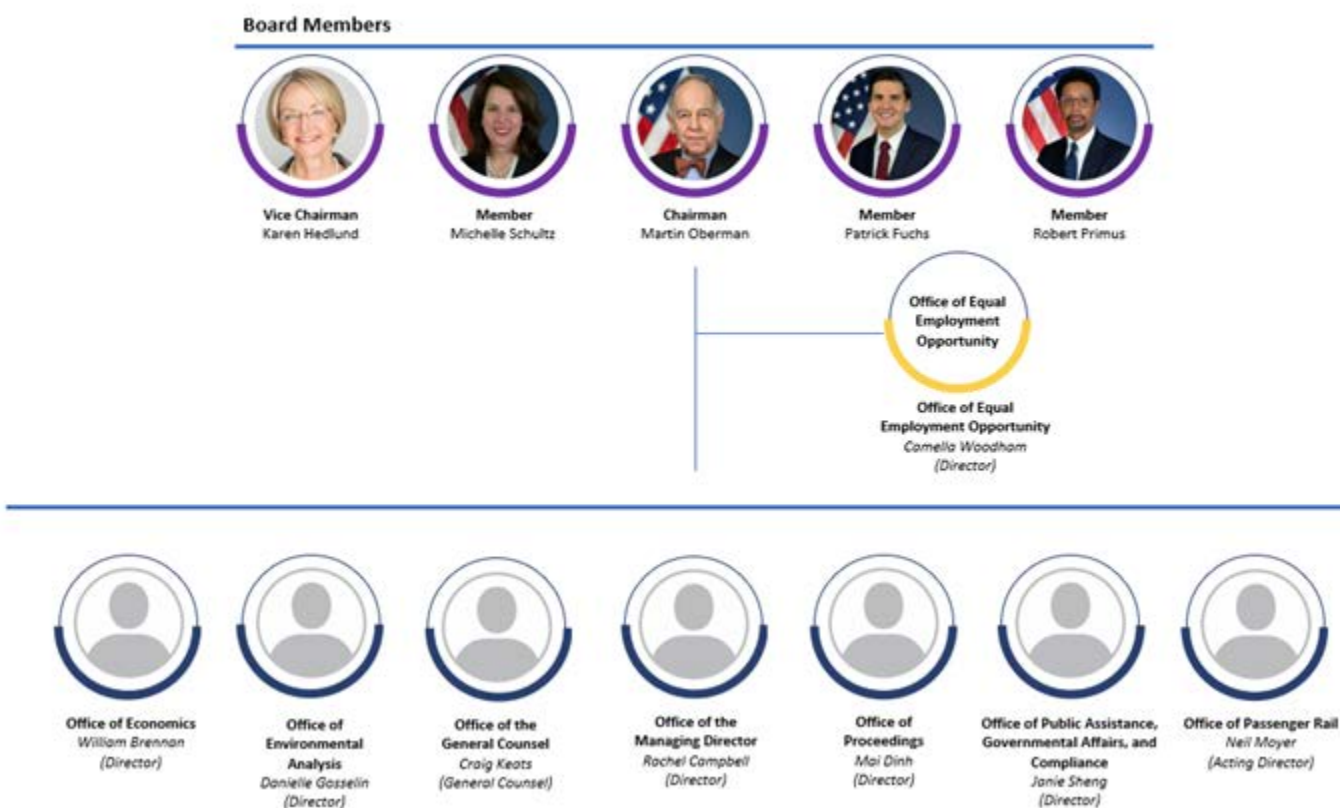
The bipartisan Board was established in 1996 as the successor to the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Board was administratively aligned with the Department of Transportation until enactment of the Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2015 (STB Reauthorization Act), Pub. L. No. 114-110, which established the Board as a fully independent agency on December 18, 2015. The STB Reauthorization Act also expanded the Board's membership from three to five Board members.

Statutory Authority

The economics of freight rail regulation affect the national transportation network and are important to our nation's economy. For this reason, Congress gave the STB sole jurisdiction over railroad rates, practices, and service. Congress also gave the STB sole jurisdiction over rail mergers and consolidations, abandonments of existing rail lines, and new rail line constructions, exempting STB-approved transactions from federal antitrust laws and state and municipal laws.

While a majority of the Board's work involves freight railroads, the STB's involvement with passenger rail matters has increased. The STB also performs certain oversight of the intercity bus industry, non-energy and non-water pipelines, household goods carriers' tariffs, and rate regulation of non-contiguous domestic water transportation (marine freight shipping involving the mainland United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories and possessions).

STB Office Organization Chart



STB Offices

Board Members

The Board consists of five members nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Since January 11, 2021, the Board has had a full complement of five members. Each member has a term of five years, unless they are filling an unexpired term. If a member leaves the STB before the end of their term, a successor may be appointed to the vacant seat for the remainder of that term. The Board's governing statute permits a member to serve up to one year after the expiration of that member's term unless a successor is appointed.

STB Office Overview

In addition to the offices of the Board members, the staff of the STB is organized into seven offices. These seven offices are comprised of attorneys, economists, and financial, transportation, and environmental analysts, as well as human resource specialists, paralegals, Information Technology (IT) specialists, facilities managers, and contractors providing support to ensure the STB has the capabilities to meet its statutory responsibilities.



The Office of Economics (OE)

OE provides economic, cost, financial, and engineering analyses for the Board. OE also makes available to the public a variety of statistical and financial analyses of the railroad industry. OE manages the Board-prescribed Uniform System of Accounts and cost accounting systems. OE also audits Class I carriers to ensure their compliance with these systems and uses the data provided by carriers to develop and disseminate the Uniform Railroad Costing System.



The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA)

OEA assists the Board in meeting its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related Federal statutes. NEPA requires the Board to consider potential environmental impacts before making its final decision in certain cases. OEA conducts an independent environmental review of cases filed with the Board and prepares any necessary environmental documentation. OEA also conducts public outreach to inform the public about proposals before the Board and invites public comments on related environmental matters. It also provides technical advice and

environmental recommendations to the Board on pending matters, as appropriate.



The Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

OGC provides legal counsel to the Board. In that role, OGC evaluates and advises on the defensibility of the agency's decisions and defends those decisions when challenged in court. OGC also advises the Board on various mission-related matters, including the Freedom of Information Act, the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, NEPA, and records management. Finally, OGC assists both the Department of Justice in ancillary litigation related to transportation matters and other matters of government-wide interest.



The Office of the Managing Director (OMD)

OMD provides a wide range of administrative services in support of the Board's mission, including human resource management, financial services, IT support, cybersecurity, the Privacy Act, and facilities management. It heads the Board's Privacy and Risk Management programs, as well as houses the Board's Chief Data Officer, who is responsible for guiding the agency's compliance

with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018.



The Office of Proceedings (OP)

OP has primary responsibility for managing the public record in formal cases (or proceedings) before the Board, which includes making recommendations regarding the resolution of issues presented in those cases and drafting the decisions issued by the Board. Specifically, OP oversees the Board's caseload, providing legal and policy recommendations (in conjunction with other Board offices, as needed) to the Board members for resolving the issues presented, and preparing drafts of decisions. OP also performs administrative services for the Board, including receiving and processing formal filings from the public; administering the Board's voting process; coordinating with the Federal Register for publication of decisions; and tracking the Board's casework. In addition, OP maintains a database for recording and perfecting secured transactions involving vessels and railroad rolling stock.



The Office of Passenger Rail (OPR)

OPR supports the Board in its efforts to meet its responsibilities under the Passenger Rail

Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. The office provides the Board with expertise related to passenger rail that includes legal and policy guidance, engineering, data analysis, and rail operations.



The Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance (OPAGAC)

OPAGAC serves as the STB's principal point of contact for the U.S. Congress, Federal agencies, foreign, state, and local governments, interested stakeholders, the public, and the media. OPAGAC's mission is to aid the public, to disseminate accurate information concerning the agency and its work, and to help the public understand the law and the agency's decisions. This office is responsible for external operations, including governmental affairs, communications, and compliance. It is also responsible for monitoring rail operations, service analysis, maintaining tariffs, the monitoring and analysis of certain passenger rail matters, the Board's library, and mediation coordination. OPAGAC is also responsible for the management of the Rail Customer and Public Assistance program, which assists interested stakeholders and the public by answering questions pertaining to Board regulations and procedures and facilitating informal private-sector dispute resolution of rail operational and service-related issues and other matters.



Section II: Strategic Goals

Goal and Objective Overview

The STB updated its Mission and Vision, developed its Goals, specified Objectives within each Goal, and identified actionable Strategies to achieve its Goals through a collaborative, iterative process. OMD and the Chairman's Office solicited feedback on the FY18-22 Strategic Plan and discussed current and emerging priorities, as well as future interests and challenges, via an agency-

wide survey. OMD also hosted five Strategy Sessions over the course of eight months by gathering together a qualified Working Group of Office Directors and Office Directors' designees (across all levels) in order to craft the STB's FY22-26 Mission, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.

Below is a summary view of the **Strategic Goals and Objectives**.

GOAL 1

Promote and protect the public interest in surface transportation matters.

Objective 1.1: Remedy competitive and other regulatory concerns, where appropriate, by determining reasonable rates and practices for users of the national rail network and other transportation modes within the Board's jurisdiction.

Objective 1.2: Evaluate certain railroad licensing actions for consistency with the public interest, considering the potential effects on shippers, consumers, the rail network, the environment, railroad employees, and the public at large.

Objective 1.3: Promote consistent, fluid, and efficient service that fulfills the needs of customers and the public in an ever-changing economy.

Objective 1.4: Consider potential environmental and historic impacts in agency decision-making, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, and impose mitigation conditions as appropriate.

Table 1: STB Goal 1 and Goal 1's Objectives

GOAL 2

Foster a competitive and sound surface transportation system that provides reliable service at reasonable rates.

Objective 2.1: Uphold the common carrier obligation.

Objective 2.2: Preserve and enhance competition, including through regulation, where appropriate.

Objective 2.3: Provide accessible and transparent rate review processes.

Objective 2.4: Provide oversight of passenger rail service in order to carry out statutory directives.

Objective 2.5: Monitor the service and operations of carriers and take appropriate action where conditions warrant.

Objective 2.6: Monitor revenue adequacy and promote a climate that encourages carriers to invest in present and future capacity needs.

Table 2: STB Goal 2 and Goal 2's Objectives

GOAL 3

Provide an accessible, data-driven, and time- and cost-efficient regulatory process that enables stakeholders in the surface transportation industry to plan and conduct their operations effectively.

Objective 3.1: Provide well-defined formal and informal dispute resolution processes to enable parties to make informed decisions about how to best resolve their disputes.

Objective 3.2: Reach timely adjudicatory decisions by adhering to appropriate internal and external deadlines.

Objective 3.3: Conduct environmental reviews necessary to support the Board's decisions in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Table 3: STB Goal 3 and Goal 3's Objectives

GOAL 4

Employ a skilled and diverse workforce, encourage innovative leadership at all levels of STB, and apply best practices in a collaborative and well-supported environment.

Objective 4.1: Foster a workplace culture that is inclusive, equitable, and accessible by developing and employing a skilled workforce that is representative of people from diverse backgrounds at all levels of the agency.

Objective 4.2: Encourage innovative leadership at all levels of the STB that creates a culture of inclusion and, among other things, is attentive to our changing work environment.

Objective 4.3: Apply best practices in a collaborative and well-supported environment, incorporating data-driven decision-making.

Table 4: STB Goal 4 and Goal 4's Objectives



STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Promote and protect the public interest in surface transportation matters.

Freight rail is important to our nation's economy, and Congress has charged the STB with economic regulation of freight rail. The STB has sole jurisdiction over railroad rates, practices, and service, as well as rail mergers and consolidations, abandonments of existing rail lines, and new rail line construction, and the statute exempts STB-approved transactions from many Federal laws and from state and municipal laws. The STB is also responsible for certain regulatory functions related to other types of transportation, including passenger rail. Promoting and protecting the public interest is at the heart of all work of the STB. By focusing on the public interest, the STB supports the growth of our nation's economy.

Objective 1.1

Remedy competitive and other regulatory concerns, where appropriate, by determining reasonable rates and practices for users of the national rail network and other transportation modes within the Board's jurisdiction.

Objective 1.2

Evaluate certain railroad licensing actions for consistency with the public interest, considering the potential effects on shippers, consumers, the rail network, the environment, railroad employees, and the public at large.

Objective 1.3

Promote consistent, fluid, and efficient service that fulfills the needs of customers and the public in an ever-changing economy.

Objective 1.4

Consider potential environmental and historic impacts in agency decision-making, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, and impose mitigation conditions as appropriate.

The STB will attain its **first Goal** by achieving the following Objectives:

Objective 1.1: Remedy competitive and other regulatory concerns, where appropriate, by determining reasonable rates and practices for users of the national rail network and other transportation modes within the Board's jurisdiction.

The STB provides numerous paths to relief for freight rail users who seek to challenge as unreasonable the rates and practices of rail carriers.

Strategy 1.1.1: Provide rate case processes that fairly and efficiently resolve rate disputes.

Strategy 1.1.2: Provide formal and informal forums for efficient and comprehensive consideration of disputes about industry practices.

Strategy 1.1.3: Resolve in a timely manner rate and practice disputes filed with the Board, comprehensively and efficiently addressing issues and providing clarity when there is uncertainty in the interpretation of existing laws and regulations.

Strategy 1.1.4: Promulgate rules and policy statements regarding rates and practices, employing notice-and-comment procedures as appropriate.

Strategy 1.1.5: Monitor industry practices and gather information and data to allow the Board to intervene should circumstances warrant.

Objective 1.2: Evaluate certain railroad licensing actions for consistency with the public interest, considering the potential effects on shippers, consumers, the rail network, the environment, railroad employees, and the public at large.

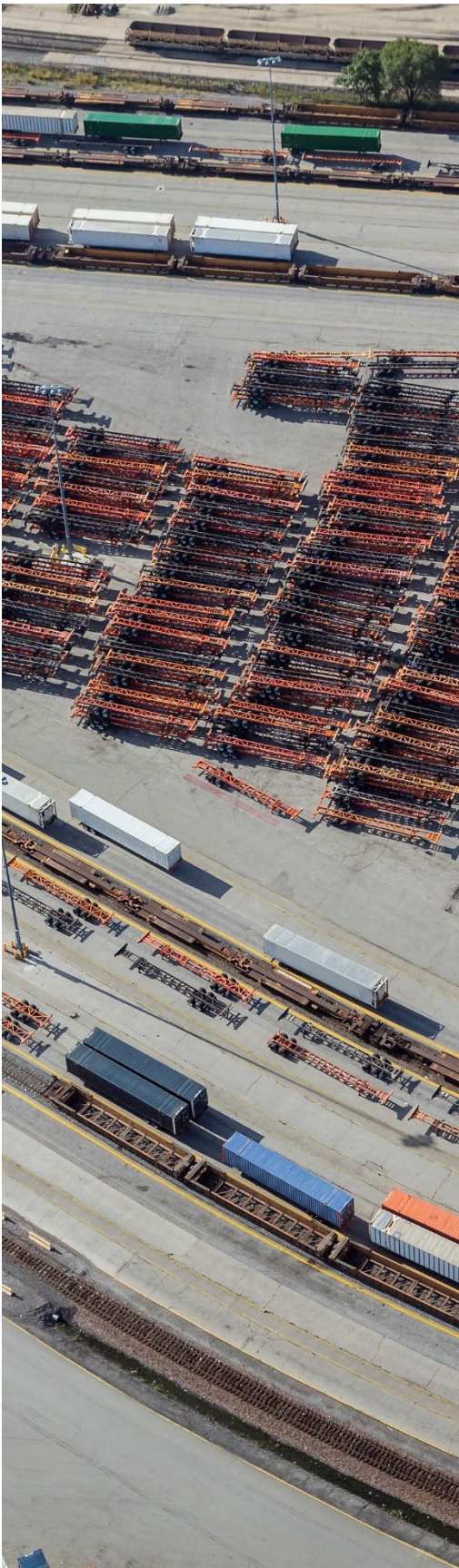
The STB considers the potential for broader effects of each licensing action on the public interest.

Strategy 1.2.1: Ensure compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

Strategy 1.2.2: Consider potential economic, environmental, and operational impacts in agency decision-making.

Strategy 1.2.3: Provide for transparency and public participation in Board decisions and policymaking to the extent practicable.





Objective 1.3: Promote consistent, fluid, and efficient service that fulfills the needs of customers and the public in an ever-changing economy.

The national rail network must be reliable, efficient, and nimble so it can provide users with the service needed to keep the economy moving.

Strategy 1.3.1: Through the Rail Customer and Public Assistance Program, provide an informal venue for the private-sector resolution of disputes, and assist Board stakeholders seeking guidance in complying with Board decisions and regulations.

Strategy 1.3.2: Promptly and fairly resolve disputes consistent with the public interest.

Strategy 1.3.3: Promulgate rules and policy statements regarding service, employing notice-and-comment procedures as appropriate.

Strategy 1.3.4: Process and consider licensing actions in furtherance of a network that meets the needs of customers and the economy.

Strategy 1.3.5: Monitor the surface transportation network and gather industry information and data to allow the Board to intervene when necessary or prudent.

Objective 1.4: Consider potential environmental and historic impacts in agency decision-making consistent with applicable laws and regulations and impose mitigation conditions as appropriate.

The STB considers how its actions could potentially affect the environment and the nation's historic resources, and seeks to avoid, minimize, and mitigate those effects where appropriate.

Strategy 1.4.1: Conduct timely and thorough environmental and historic preservation reviews consistent with NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other laws and regulations.

Strategy 1.4.2: Consult with other Federal agencies, state and local agencies, tribes, and other interested parties.

Strategy 1.4.3: Provide the opportunity for public participation in the environmental and historic review processes for specific cases before the Board.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Foster a competitive and sound surface transportation system that provides reliable service at reasonable rates.

The STB is charged with ensuring the development, coordination, and preservation of a transportation system that meets the needs of the United States. The rail transportation policy at 49 U.S.C. § 10101 directs the STB, in regulating the rail industry, to promote a safe, sound, efficient, and competitive rail transportation system in which rail carriers can earn adequate revenues while charging reasonable rates.

The STB is the economic regulator of the surface transportation system and, as such, recognizes that stakeholders in the surface transportation industry and the public need a sound and reliable system. The STB provides accessible forums for challenging rates and resolving unreasonable practice or service claims.

Objective 2.1

Uphold the common carrier obligation.

Objective 2.2

Preserve and enhance competition, including through regulation, where appropriate.

Objective 2.3

Provide accessible and transparent rate review processes.

Objective 2.4

Provide oversight of passenger rail service in order to carry out statutory directives.

Objective 2.5

Monitor the service and operations of carriers and take appropriate action where conditions warrant.

Objective 2.6

Monitor revenue adequacy and promote a climate that encourages carriers to invest in needed additional capacity.

The STB will attain its **second Goal** by achieving the following Objectives:

Objective 2.1: Uphold the common carrier obligation.

Given the nature of the railroad industry, Congress has codified the common carrier obligation of freight railroads as providing service upon reasonable request.

Strategy 2.1.1: Enforce the common carrier obligation through the formal adjudication of service complaints.

Strategy 2.1.2: Facilitate the common carrier obligation through informal dispute resolution of service complaints.

Strategy 2.1.3: Provide greater clarity on the common carrier obligation.

Objective 2.2: Preserve and enhance competition, including through regulation, where appropriate.

The rail transportation policy requires the STB to allow competition to the maximum extent possible.

Strategy 2.2.1: Evaluate policies and implement regulations to adjust to changes in the industry.

Strategy 2.2.2: Decide cases that are brought before the Board in a manner that stays current with the surface transportation system.

Objective 2.3: Provide accessible and transparent rate review processes.

The Board reviews rate reasonableness only on complaint, so it is important that the STB has rate review processes that are usable and workable.

Strategy 2.3.1: Conduct public hearings and listening sessions on matters of economic import, including, when applicable, rate procedures.

Strategy 2.3.2: Continue to improve the rate review processes.

Objective 2.4: Provide oversight of passenger rail service in order to carry out statutory directives.

The STB provides oversight of certain aspects of passenger rail service.

Strategy 2.4.1: Monitor the On-Time Performance (OTP) and delays of Amtrak's routes and trains as they provide passenger service over the nation's rail network.

Strategy 2.4.2: Enforce OTP through efficient adjudication of OTP complaints and Board-initiated investigations, when appropriate.

Strategy 2.4.3: Efficiently adjudicate access rights proceedings filed with the Board.

Objective 2.5: Monitor the service and operations of carriers and take appropriate action where conditions warrant.

The STB uses its authorities to ensure that the surface transportation system meets the needs of its users.

Strategy 2.5.1: Issue orders, adjudicate formal service complaints, and resolve petitions for declaratory orders, including common carrier, preemption, and unreasonable practice cases.

Strategy 2.5.2: Investigate changes in service metrics and/or reports from stakeholders.

Strategy 2.5.3: Issue service letters, perform site visits, and hold meetings and hearings to ensure accountability and service reliability.

Objective 2.6: Monitor revenue adequacy and promote a climate that encourages carriers to invest in needed additional capacity.

The STB works with its stakeholders and the public to help the surface transportation system meet the current and future needs of its users.

Strategy 2.6.1: Engage and communicate with stakeholders regarding the investment, maintenance, and development of the surface transportation system.

Strategy 2.6.2: Issue decisions and develop rules that recognize the needs of the shipping public and the current state of the surface transportation system.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Provide an accessible, data-driven, and time- and cost-efficient regulatory process that enables stakeholders in the surface transportation industry to plan and conduct their operations effectively.

An efficient, competitive, and sound surface transportation network is necessary to sustain and grow the nation's economy. With its exclusive regulatory authority to resolve certain disputes and approve proposed rail line acquisitions, mergers, constructions and abandonments, the STB plays a key oversight role in surface transportation matters.

An STB regulatory process that is accessible, data-driven, and time- and cost-efficient can reduce the costs of regulatory compliance and assist in increasing the operating efficiencies of the surface transportation industry. Therefore, the STB will strive to achieve the following outcomes associated with Goal 3:

- Maintain effective and efficient regulatory processes; and
- Inform interested stakeholders of the STB's regulatory processes and how they can access and participate in those processes.

Objective 3.1

Provide well-defined formal and informal dispute resolution processes to enable parties to make informed decisions about how to best resolve their disputes.

Objective 3.2

Reach timely adjudicatory decisions by adhering to appropriate internal and external deadlines.

Objective 3.3

Conduct environmental reviews necessary to support the Board's decisions in a timely and cost-effective manner.



The STB will attain its **third Goal** by achieving the following Objectives:

Objective 3.1: Provide well-defined formal and informal dispute resolution processes to enable parties to make informed decisions about how to best resolve their disputes.

Parties may be more engaged and satisfied if they can make well-informed decisions on whether to voluntarily settle disputes, enter alternative dispute resolution processes, or litigate before the Board.

Strategy 3.1.1: Offer alternative dispute resolution services that facilitate private sector solutions to problems.

Strategy 3.1.2: Hold conferences, hearings, and oral arguments and provide adequate guidance to the parties as to the methods the Board intends to use to adjudicate disputes.

Objective 3.2: Reach timely adjudicatory decisions by adhering to appropriate internal and external deadlines.

By setting, disclosing, and adhering to appropriate processing timelines, the STB can facilitate the resolution of disputes in a timely manner, thereby enabling the disputing parties to move forward.

Strategy 3.2.1: Develop adjudicative procedures that foster fairness and integrity.

Strategy 3.2.2: Establish internal timelines and deadlines for work products needed to support Board decisions.

Strategy 3.2.3: Ensure proper coordination with all Board offices with roles or responsibilities in the decision process.

Objective 3.3: Conduct environmental reviews necessary to support the Board's decisions in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Conduct environmental reviews necessary to support the Board's decisions in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Strategy 3.3.1: Establish timely and responsive schedules for environmental review documents.





STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Employ a skilled and diverse workforce, encourage innovative leadership at all levels of STB, and apply best practices in a collaborative and well-supported environment.

The STB needs a skilled and innovative workforce to carry out its regulatory goals. The civil service provisions of Title 5 of the U.S. Code, along with the regulations supporting them and principles of morality, equality, and good governance, mandate that all Federal agencies, including the STB, perform their duties professionally, fairly, and free of prejudice and discrimination. The STB selected this goal to affirmatively endorse the concept of operating professionally, fairly, inclusively, and respectfully of all persons. The STB also selected this goal to place renewed emphasis on the role of data management and data-driven decision-making in STB operations, as described in the Objectives and Strategies below.

Recognizing that diversity of views results in stronger decision-making, the STB is making strategic decisions to create a workplace culture that is diverse, inclusive, accessible, and equitable. A workforce that is representative of people from diverse backgrounds and encourages learning from those differences will

create a workplace culture that produces strong and innovative solutions.

Objective 4.1

Foster a workplace culture that is inclusive, equitable, and accessible by developing and employing a skilled workforce that is representative of people from diverse backgrounds at all levels of the agency.

Objective 4.2

Encourage innovative leadership at all levels of the STB that creates a culture of inclusion and, among other things, is attentive to our changing work environment.

Objective 4.3

Apply best practices in a collaborative and well-supported environment, incorporating data-driven decision-making.

The STB will attain its **fourth Goal** by achieving the following Objectives:

Objective 4.1: Foster a workplace culture that is inclusive, equitable, and accessible by developing and employing a skilled workforce that is representative of people from diverse backgrounds at all levels of the agency.

STB operates at its maximum potential when its workforce is talented, innovative, and inclusive.

Strategy 4.1.1: Develop an agency human capital plan to identify the current and future needs of the Board to fill those gaps necessary to achieve the agency's goals.

Strategy 4.1.2: Examine and expand hiring programs and processes to maximize opportunities for recruiting diverse candidate pools.



Strategy 4.1.3: Survey the workforce and conduct assessments to identify the level of current skills and skill development necessary.

Strategy 4.1.4: Support training and reskilling to address identified needs through Individual Development Plans.

Objective 4.2: Encourage innovative leadership at all levels of the STB that creates a culture of inclusion and, among other things, is attentive to our changing work environment.

A skilled and diverse workforce contributes its ideas both up and down the organizational chart, making STB an innovative and meaningful regulator and a great place to work.

Strategy 4.2.1: Analyze Federal Employee Viewpoint Results and other agency surveys to identify management practices that would improve employee satisfaction.

Strategy 4.2.2: Identify specialized training and ensure these opportunities are equitably distributed amongst staff.

Strategy 4.2.3: Recognize staff for innovation and inclusiveness that benefits the agency.

Objective 4.3: Apply best practices in a collaborative and well-supported environment, incorporating data-driven decision-making.

STB intends to use proven practices, analyzing data to measure past events and to predict future developments in a way that serves its stakeholders today and into the future.

Strategy 4.3.1: Ensure agency data is consistent and accessible across the agency to form the basis for data-based decision-making.

Strategy 4.3.2: Establish a standard set of core functions and tasks for each office or section.

Strategy 4.3.3: Implement recommendations from the agency's Data Maturity Assessment efforts to apply Data Management best practices.

Strategy 4.3.3: Reward change agents.

Outlook

The following factors are challenges that could affect achievement of Strategic Goals and Objectives.

External Factors

1.	Changes in the Board's budget, staffing demands, and resource limits.
2.	Congressional or Executive action, including reauthorization of the Board, that could result in changes to the scope of the Board's authority or compliance requirements.
3.	Changes in market demand, competition, or strategic direction in the surface transportation industries under the Board's jurisdiction.
4.	The risk of domestic and international security threats, including cybersecurity, to both the industry and the agency.
5.	Disruption in the agreements with the Board's shared service providers.
6.	Future risks to the supply chain and economy.

Internal Factors

1.	Rapidly changing technology landscape (including the need for data analytics, the need to adapt and ensure data protection during telework, and reliance on railroads for supplying documentation).
2.	Opportunity to expand STB's culture to further promote adaptation and change.
3.	Need to complete STB's cloud migration while maintaining strong information systems that enable STB's ability to achieve its mission.

Vote of the Board Members

Decided by the Board, Board Members Fuchs, Hedlund, Oberman, Primus, and Schultz on February 28, 2023.
Board Member Fuchs dissented with a separate expression.

Board Member Fuchs, dissenting:

I commend the Chairman for leading an open and collaborative process, and I extend my gratitude to the staff who submitted ideas and workshopped critical aspects of the Strategic Plan. While I agree that this plan conveys the agency's deep commitment to public service, competition, transparency, and impartiality, I have concerns that the implementation of some of the objectives will conflict with my values and vision for the agency. I respectfully dissent.



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