



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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

December 2019 Report

Prepared for Congress per the requirements of section 3(b)(2) of Public Law 115-336.

21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act - Report to Congress on Modernizing Agency Websites and Digital Services

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

The 21st Century IDEA requires each federal executive branch agency to provide a prioritized list of the agency's "most-viewed or ... otherwise important" public websites and digital services in compliance with section 3(a) of the law, and to provide an estimation of the cost and schedule to modernize those sites and services.

The STB has one main website, www.stb.gov, through which all 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.untabasinrailwayeis.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 effort to modernize the STB's website. In modernizing its website, the Board has ensured to the greatest extent practicable that it has complied with section 3(a)(1-8) of the 21st Century IDEA, as further discussed below.

The Board has reviewed its website and prioritized services that require modernization. As required by section 3(b)(2)(B) and (C) of the 21st Century IDEA, the Board has identified the following priorities:

- In accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 508), the Board is working with its website redesign team to ensure the site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. The Board has identified certain accessibility issues and is working with its team to remediate them by April 30, 2020. The estimated cost of this remediation is \$30,000.00.
- The redesigned website has an improved appearance on mobile devices, and all of the data from the website is available on mobile devices. The STB understands further improvement is needed to ensure that use of the website on mobile devices is seamless

¹ 132 Stat. 5025-5028.

and easily navigable, including compliance with section 508. The anticipated cost of improving the mobile capabilities is \$37,000.00. The Board anticipates making further improvements by September 30, 2020.

- Additional improvements to the website will include integrating the third-party managed environmental websites, such as www.untabasinrailwayeis.com, into the STB website architecture; making the search feature for both the website as a whole and STB records that appear on the website more robust; and converting from an industry standard secure connection through on-premise infrastructure to the industry standard use of cloud-based web services. The cost of these remaining items is anticipated to be \$115,000.00. Improving the search feature is an ongoing effort that will continue throughout 2020. The Board anticipates that integrating any third-party managed environmental websites and converting to cloud-based web services will be completed by December 2020.

The website redesign 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)

As noted above, the Board is working to ensure that the redesigned website is section 508 compliant.

Section 3(a)(2)

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

Section 3(a)(4)

The STB's redesigned 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 redesigned 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 will be used to continuously improve functionality and usability of the Board's website. With the redesigned website, the Board is now also relying 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 a more customized digital experience through an improved electronic filing process, payments through Pay.gov, and electronic service of documents.

Section 3(a)(8)

As noted, the redesigned website is more accessible on common mobile devices, and the Board intends to continue to work on mobile compatibility going forward.²

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,



Ann Begeman
Chairman

² With respect to section 5 of 21st Century IDEA, the Board relies upon electronic signatures that comply with the standards of 15 U.S.C. 7001 et seq. for the majority of its contracting and other internal documents.