



OIG: Early challenges on Amtrak's Airo™ train acquisition led to scope changes, cost increases, and schedule delays

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WASHINGTON – Amtrak did not validate trainset and maintenance facility designs with its own personnel early in its \$7.3 billion Intercity Trainset program, now called Amtrak Airo™, resulting in costly redesigns and schedule delays, an Amtrak Office of Inspector General report released today said.

In June 2021, Amtrak contracted with Siemens Corporation to purchase up to 83 new trainsets, the largest passenger rail equipment acquisition in its history. On December 15, 2022, [Amtrak unveiled renderings of its Airo™ trains](#) at an event in New York's Moynihan Train Hall. The company expects the new trainsets to increase reliability, efficiency, and on-time performance and, as the program progresses, plans to use Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds to pay for them.

According to the report, Amtrak experienced early challenges with stakeholder engagement in its trainset acquisition and maintenance facility modification work. In one example from the report, Amtrak waited until three months after signing the Intercity Trainset contract with Siemens before its food and beverage personnel reviewed the design of the planned food service car. They found that the initial design for the car lacked the necessary food storage space to accommodate longer trips and required additional space for customers to stand and move through the galley car. As a result, Amtrak initiated a change order to redesign the café car, which increased program costs by \$42.5 million and will delay the delivery of the first trainsets by five-and-a-half months, the report said.

In addition, Amtrak did not engage with key personnel at the maintenance facilities that will accommodate the new trainsets as it developed their designs. For example, in February 2022, program officials visited the Seattle maintenance facility to verify the preliminary design, but onsite personnel identified a design element that would have negatively impacted maintenance and commuter train operations in the yard, which resulted in another design change. Amtrak paused all maintenance facility design activities in spring 2022 to conduct stakeholder workshops at each of the 21 facilities it planned to modify as part of the Intercity Trainset program. Any additional design changes resulting from the workshops could delay construction by 10 to 13 months, the report said.

Amtrak identified these challenges and began addressing them. It has also since established a program management framework that closely aligns with company and industry standards, including adding cost, risk, and change management controls. The report notes, however, that Amtrak has not established controls to avoid challenges with stakeholder engagement on ICT or on future major capital programs.

To address the report's findings, the OIG recommended the company ensure program personnel to identify and engage all relevant stakeholders to specify requirements early and modify those requirements as program needs and assumptions evolve. More information is included in the full report which can be downloaded on the OIG's website: <https://direc.to/iuWN>.