

# Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

**massDOT**  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

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## **Ridership Forecasts 101**

As part of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study next steps, the team will undertake the development and analysis of the four additional potential service plans, which will include ridership forecasts. How ridership forecasts are created depends on two main questions: 1) what type of forecast is needed? and 2) What data is available?

Forecasts can be used to estimate the ridership for a future year or a change in service. For a change in service, such as adding a new stop along an existing service, forecasts tend to be less complex as much of the data required for the forecast are available. In this example, the service is operational and information on the current ridership, the travel market, and service characteristics is known. Using these data, a model can be developed that estimates the ridership at the new stop based on the known relationships between the existing ridership, level of service, and socioeconomic data. This model is applied to the new stop to estimate ridership.

To develop a model for a new service, the only available data are the travel market information for the corridor. To establish the relationship between ridership and transit service, the study team looks at ridership data from similar existing transit services. For the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, these data come from services such as the existing Amtrak Downeaster service and the MBTA commuter rail system. Similar to the new stop estimating process explained above, a model can be developed that estimates ridership based on the level of service, known relationships between the existing travel markets and socioeconomic data, and the ridership patterns in the comparable services.

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The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is conducting a study to examine the benefits, costs, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from North Adams to Greenfield and Boston, with the speed, frequency, and reliability necessary to be a competitive option for travel along this corridor. Please visit the Study website for more information on the project: <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>

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If information is needed in another language, please contact the MassDOT Title VI Specialist by phone at (857) 368-8580.

Caso esta informação seja necessária em outro idioma, favor contar o Especialista em Título VI do MassDOT pelo fone 857-368-8580.

Si necesita información en otro lenguaje, favor contactar al especialista de MassDOT del Título VI al 857-368-8580.

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