

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

massDOT
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MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study May 2022 Newsletter

Welcome to the May 2022 Newsletter for the MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This is the start of monthly newsletters for the project that will provide study updates, fun facts, and other information relevant to the Northern Tier Corridor. Please keep an eye out for additional newsletters in the future. Thank you!

Next Working Group Meeting Announcement

We invite you to attend the second Working Group meeting for MassDOT's Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The meeting will be held through Zoom and is open to the public.

This virtual Working Group meeting will take place on **June 22, 2022, from 1-2:30 PM.**

At this meeting, the study team will provide a study update and engage the Working Group in a review and discussion of existing conditions in the study area. Working Group members will receive information on how to register for the meeting in a separate email.

For more information about this Study and to submit a comment or question to the team, please visit the website at <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>. Visit [Website](https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study) for more information on the project: <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>.

Update on the Study Process

Since the last Working Group meeting, the study team focused on finalizing the study's goals and objectives and completing the work under Task 2: Documenting Past Efforts, Task 3: Current Conditions - Market Analysis, and Task 4: Current Conditions - Physical, Regulatory, and Right-of-Way (ROW) Ownership. The work from all three of these tasks as summarized below provides important information that will serve as the foundation for developing and evaluating potential passenger rail service options in the corridor during later stages of the study.

Task 2: Documenting Past Efforts - the study team reviewed 24 past studies that span several topics related to the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, including passenger and freight rail studies, general transportation and transit plans for area communities, and transportation policy and economic development studies and plans. These documents provide valuable insight into factors affecting transportation investment decisions and travel choices for residents and visitors.

Task 3: Current Conditions - Market Analysis - the study team reviewed demographic, employment, and travel trends along the Northern Tier Corridor to develop estimates for future travel trends. This work gave us our first pass at how the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors have played a role in corridor travel and settlement patterns. As each month passes, more is being learned about COVID-19's impact on mobility in the corridor and throughout the region. The study team will be regularly monitoring such findings and make sure that all study elements rely on the best possible information.

Task 4: Current Conditions - Physical, Regulatory, and ROW Ownership - the study team completed an assessment of opportunities and constraints based on current conditions of the Northern Tier Corridor infrastructure, railroad ownership, and operations by freight and passenger trains.

Update on CSX Purchase of Pan Am Railways

On April 14, 2022, the United States Surface Transportation Board (STB) approved CSX's application to acquire Pan Am Railways (PAR). CSX will move forward with the acquisition with a planned closing date of June 1, 2022. The acquisition will incorporate Pan Am Railways' 1,200-mile rail network through New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine into the CSX's much larger 21,000-mile network that serves 23 states in the eastern United States and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Through the acquisition, CSX will assume PAR's half ownership of the Pan Am Southern LLC (PAS), a separate railroad jointly owned with Norfolk Southern that operates freight service from Ayer, MA into Vermont and New

York State. The PAS owns the right of way between Fitchburg and North Adams where Northern Tier Passenger Rail service would operate.

For the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, the approval of this acquisition by CSX will change one of the study's primary railroad stakeholders. This change in ownership likely will lead to changes in freight train operations in the study area that will be incorporated into our evaluation of future conditions.

For more information on the merger, please visit the STB website at: <https://www.stb.gov/news-communications/latest-news/pr-22-22/>

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.

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