

Rail & Transit Report

Meredith Slesinger | Rail & Transit Administrator

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Transit Update





FTA Low-No Awards

- FTA announced awards of approximately \$31.3 million to BRTA, LRTA, SRTA, and BAT for the purchase of hybrid-electric and battery-electric buses.
 - Funding from this grant will also be used for vehicle repair and charging equipment as well as the development of regional workforce training programs. MassDOT will provide the required matching funds.
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Bilateral RTA MOUs

- The next two-year period covered by MOUs between MassDOT and the RTAs went into effect July 1, 2023.
- The MOUs are based on a system of performance metrics including ridership and financial performance.



Transit Update (cont.)

Budget Update for RTA Funding (in conf. committee)

The Senate's budget includes \$150M for transit operations:

- \$90.5M will be distributed the same as FY23 (the baseline formula), \$3.5M will be distributed based on the RTA agreed upon 60/30/10 formula.
- \$56M from line item 1596-2406 (Education and Transportation Fund) will be distributed by MassDOT to RTAs considered to have a proportionately lower net cost of service and the remaining amount will use the 60/30/10 formula.

Additional \$44M for discretionary awards:

- \$15M shall be dedicated to fare-free pilots by the RTAs,
- \$25M for innovation grants for transit providers, and
- \$4M for the Community Transit Grant Program

RTA Council

The RTA Council met July 12 and discussed issues related to implementation of electric vehicle fleets, workforce shortage and driver recruitment initiative, and next steps on CDL licensing issues with the RMV and the State Police.



Rail Update

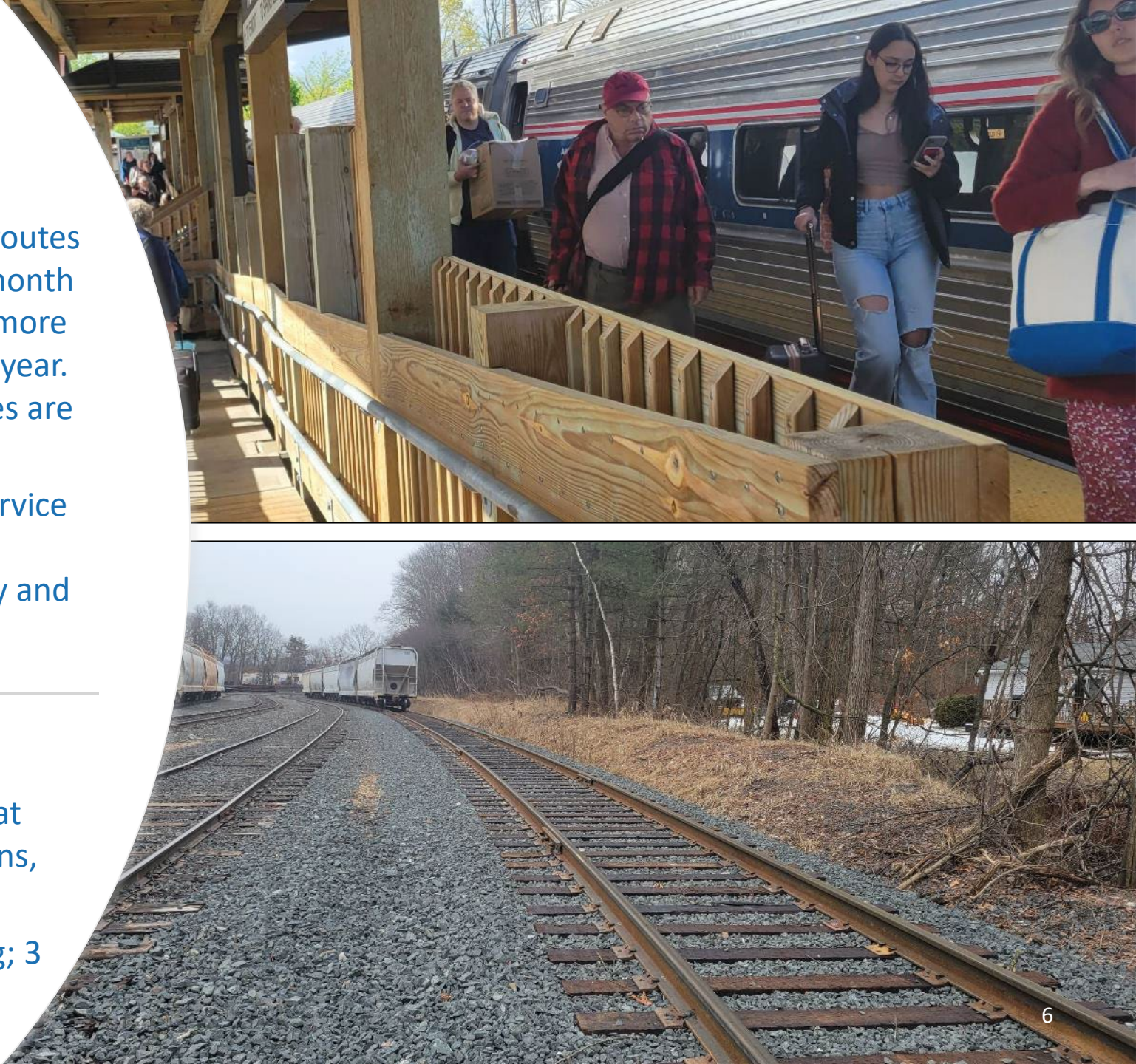


Rail Services

- The Valley Flyer, Hartford Line, and Vermonter routes have seen great ridership increases with each month outperforming prior highs. May 2023 saw 18% more riders than the previous record for May set last year. However, Amtrak equipment and crew shortages are causing reliability issues for the Valley Flyer.
- Two Amtrak Northeast Regional trains began service on June 5 offering single-seat ride options for traveling between Springfield and New York City and points south.

Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP)

- IRAP is a public/private partnership program that freight rail projects that grow shipping operations, create jobs, and reduce trucks on the road.
- 10 applications were received for SFY24 funding; 3 have been identified as eligible for award.



Rail Update (cont.)

Projects

- Funding for planning and design for a station in Palmer and infrastructure improvements in Pittsfield to benefit future West-East service included in the CIP.
- *Knowledge Corridor*: NTP to Manafort Transit for \$1.8 million to repair two steel bridges; a designer has been selected for fiber optic cable installation.
- *Berkshire Line*: two timber bridges are being replaced as steel bridges in Lee and Lenox.
- *New England Central Railroad*: Replacing steel members on eight steel bridges to increase freight loading to 286K for \$9.6M in Palmer and Millers Fall.
- Simulation modeling continues with CSX and Amtrak to identify infrastructure necessary to increase passenger service between Springfield and Worcester.
- Three grant applications pending with Federal Railroad Administration

