

Rail & Transit Report

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TRANSIT UPDATE

- **Community Transit Grant Program.** The Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP) awards funds to help meet the transportation and mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities. The FY24 Operating and Mobility Management Cycle opened on May 8. Applications are due June 23. RTD hosted two training sessions with approximately 50 attendees at each session. The FY24 Vehicle cycle will be delayed until later this year due to supply chain/procurement issues. MassDOT expects to be able to award the FY23 vehicles in the coming weeks.
- **FTA State Management Review.** The entrance conference was held on May 10. The State Management Review is a comprehensive oversight review of recipients designed to assess management practices and program implementation. SMRs also ensure the programs are administered in accordance with federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53), federal transportation law provisions, and FTA requirements, and are meeting program objectives.
- The **Town of Great Barrington** reported that they have launched their on-demand service with expanded hours. They received federal New Freedom funding and a section 5310 mobility management grant from MassDOT to build on their multi-town senior transportation service with added on-demand capacity and expanded hours for seniors and people with disabilities. They have also opened excess capacity to the public, including low-income individuals and college students, in this rural area.
- **RTAs** have agreed to move forward with the use of \$637K in unused State Operating Funds on an RTA Driver recruitment billboard messaging campaign.
- **Bilateral MOUs.** The two-year MOUs between MassDOT and the RTAs are up for renewal and will be finalized before June 30, the end of the fiscal year. The MOUs are based on a system of performance metrics and that incorporates Performance Targets most relevant to the RTA's unique system in the categories of Ridership, Customer Service and Satisfaction, Asset Management, and Financial Performance, including Farebox Recovery. RTD has shared proposed MOU language with RTAs. Targets from each RTA are due Friday, May 19.

RAIL UPDATE

- **Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission.** Presented information regarding enabling projects for West-East Rail which include expanding capacity at South Station and adding a third track to the Worcester-Framingham Line between West Natick station and Wellesley Farms station. Both projects were identified as prerequisites in the East-West Passenger Rail Study completed in January 2021.
- **Rail Services.**
 - Berkshire Flyer tickets are now on sale! Service begins Memorial Day weekend and runs through Columbus Day weekend. Tickets are available on Amtrak.com, the Amtrak app, and by calling 800-USA-RAIL.
 - Two Amtrak Northeast Regional trains will begin service on June 5 offering single-seat ride options for traveling between Springfield and New York City and points south. Tickets are available on Amtrak.com, the Amtrak app, and by calling 800-USA-RAIL.
- **Industrial Rail Access Program.** Applications are due June 1. IRAP is a public/private partnership program that provides financial assistance to eligible applicants who are prepared to invest in rail improvement projects connected to the Massachusetts freight rail transportation network and focused on increasing or improving rail transportation to Massachusetts shippers.
- **Projects**
 - Roof repairs continue on the Buzzard Bay Depot and Tower.
 - Advancing process to procure 10 ballast cars and 10 side dumps.
 - Advancing simulation modeling with CSX and Amtrak to refine needed infrastructure improvements between Springfield and Worcester. FRA expects to make grant award announcements under the two programs in late summer (August/September) and early winter (November/December).

