

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 annual competitive program distributes Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities funds and State Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) funds.
The FY24 Operating and Mobility Management Cycle will be open May 8-June 23, with training sessions May 5 and May 8. The FY24 Vehicle cycle will be delayed until later this year due to supply chain/procurement issues.
- **FTA State Management Review.** The entrance conference will be held May 10. The State Management Review is a comprehensive oversight review of recipients designed to assess management practices and program implementation.
- **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.
- **RTA Council.** MassDOT hosted the first in-person RTA Council meeting since the pandemic on April 26. Topics discussed included the workforce shortage, fleet electrification, and CDL licensing concerns.

RAIL UPDATE

- **West-East Rail.** Jointly with Amtrak and with support from CSX, submitted a \$108 million grant application for the FRA's Federal-State Partnership Program-National Network to make improvements between Springfield and Worcester that would result in two Inland Route roundtrips between Boston project was also submitted in December for FRA's CRISI program and is also eligible for the Fed-State funding. CRISI awards are expected to be announced in August/September. MassDOT also executed an agreement with CSX to begin preliminary engineering and simulation modeling.
- **Rail Services.**
 - Massachusetts rail services (Hartford Line, Valley Flyer, and Vermonter) experience achieved record ridership in March 2023 which is 30% more than the previous high from March 2019.
 - Berkshire Flyer tickets are now on sale! Service begins Memorial Day weekend. Tickets are available on Amtrak.com, the Amtrak app, and by calling 800-USA-RAIL
- **Industrial Rail Access Program.** The application period for FY24 will open in early May. 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.
- **Construction.**
 - Mass Central Mainline: 13,832 defective ties have been marked for replacement in the next 3 months.
 - Conn River Line: Rail welding has restarted to complete Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) sections in the next 3 months
 - Berkshire Line: Project for 8 miles of CWR, 5 Bridges, 12 Culverts, private crossings have restarted. 2 other bridges will be replaced in Lenox and Pittsfield.

