

## MassDOT Completes Acquisition of Framingham Secondary Rail Line

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BOSTON - Today, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced it had completed the acquisition of the Framingham Secondary Rail Line, a 21-mile segment of rail that connects Framingham and Mansfield. The line was purchased from CSX Corporation for \$23 million.

Purchase of the Framingham Secondary is a strategic investment that links the Framingham/Worcester, Needham, Franklin, and the Attleboro/Northeast Corridor commuter rail lines together. The Framingham Secondary Line is also a major rail corridor for the shipment of freight between several key points in eastern Massachusetts, including Readville, Milford, Franklin, Fall River, and New Bedford, as well as Worcester. The line is also used for passenger service to and from Patriots home games at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough. For the purposes of planning for long-term infrastructure needs, purchase of the line provides added rail capacity that allows for passenger service to travel on alternative routes in cases where capital projects may disrupt normal service.

"After careful consideration of the agreement to purchase the Framingham Secondary Rail Line from CSX, MassDOT concluded that acquiring this rail asset supports our goals of increasing use of freight rail, which takes trucks off our highways and reduces greenhouse gases by consolidating the movement of freight," said MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack. "Additionally, purchase of the line establishes the interconnectivity of four of our major commuter rail lines, which allows us to plan for future rail upgrades in a way that will minimize disruptions by creating options for trains to continue providing passenger service by bypassing sections of rail on any of the four lines that would be under construction."

Purchase of the line will also guarantee that game-day passenger service to Gillette Stadium for Patriots games will continue. The rail line's current condition is only slightly above standards required for passenger service. MassDOT's ownership of the line, coupled with infrastructure upgrades, will allow for the continuation of the successful game-day service. During the 2014-2015 season, 17,128 riders took the train to Foxborough; 6,015 more riders came from Providence, through Mansfield along the southerly end of the Framingham Secondary.

"Beyond the short-term value of supporting the shipment of freight, in the long term, the line has the potential to support future economic development," said MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator Astrid Glynn. "The communities to the southwest of Boston are experiencing strong regional growth. Should that trend continue, we would look to engage the surrounding communities in a conversation about the potential for a pilot program of additional passenger rail service."

Prior to enhanced service, the line would require significant upgrades to track, signals, and switches, to accommodate regular passenger trains. With preliminary upgrades set to begin next spring, any pilot of service would not begin before calendar year 2017.

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