

# CONNECTICUT RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT



Amtrak is entering a new era of intercity passenger rail investment. Advancing major projects, including the Connecticut River Bridge Replacement Project, will address the backlog of State-of-Good-Repair (SOGR) work and highlight plans for expanding rail service on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and across the network. Combined with the addition of new trainsets and the modernization of stations, each of these improvements will benefit customers, communities and the nation.

## ***Project Need***

Owned by Amtrak, the existing two-track Connecticut River Bridge crosses the Connecticut River between the towns of Old Saybrook and Old Lyme in southern Connecticut—roughly mid-way between New York and Providence. This critical piece of infrastructure services Amtrak, CTDOT's Shore Line East and Providence and Worcester Railroad trains to carry passengers and freight along the busy NEC. Built in 1907, the Bridge is approaching the end of its service life and will need to be replaced with a new structure to maintain future rail services across the Connecticut River. The age of the bridge and condition of the operating system results in the need for frequent maintenance. The replacement of the Connecticut River Bridge is necessary to preserve reliability and allow for an improved navigation channel for maritime users.

## ***Infrastructure Background***

The 1,500 foot-long Connecticut River Bridge was constructed in 1907 and comprises ten spans including a 160 foot-long drawspan (rolling-lift bascule variety). The wide variety of trains utilizing the bridge and the need for continual maintenance, results in tightly managed and restrictive operations. While regular, major repairs have occurred on the bridge for nearly 20 years, few repairs and/or inspections can be made without disrupting rail operations.

***The Connecticut River Bridge is a vital piece of infrastructure serving the NEC, which is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the U.S., both in terms of ridership and service frequency.***

***Replacement of this structure is critical to maintaining a strong economy for the entire Northeast.***

# 115

*At 115 years old, the  
pre-World War I bridge  
needs replacement*

# 56

*Daily passenger and freight  
movements cross the bridge*

# +25 mph

*Increase in speed provided by  
replacement of the bridge*

## **Project Benefits**

- *More reliable, modern and faster service*
- *Expansion of future high-speed rail, intercity, commuter and freight rail operations*
- *Improved maritime navigation and safety*
- *Enhanced trade connectivity for economic growth*

Utilizing modern components for the movable bridge's mechanical and electrical systems, the new Bridge has been designed to be more durable and reliable. The design also focused on easing long-term maintenance, which will also contribute to the overall reliability of the Bridge.

The new Bridge is also being designed to provide 6 feet of additional clearance (with the movable span in the closed position). This will support better maritime uses along the river by maintaining navigation and reduce restrictions while the Bridge is lowered to allow the passage of trains.

## **Project Status**

Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration have cooperated on an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a new replacement bridge, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). After the evaluation and public screening of multiple alternatives, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was completed in January 2017 for Selected Alternative 5A. The study included preliminary engineering and 30% design, which was advanced in close coordination with the adjacent communities to ensure aesthetic consistency and to respect the surrounding area's historic character. The replacement bridge design is 100% complete with final plans anticipated to allow construction to begin in Early 2024. Amtrak continues to coordinate with various agencies at both the State and Federal level to secure the necessary environmental permits for this project.

**Permits are now needed to allow the project to advance to the Construction Phase. Amtrak intends to prepare and submit Permit Applications to the Regulatory Agencies. As part of this permit application process, public questions and comments are welcome.**

## **Contact Us**



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## **Project Funding**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, has made available robust federal funding to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in order to advance major infrastructure projects on the Northeast Corridor, such as the Connecticut River Bridge Replacement Project. The FRA will work with Amtrak and state and local partners to ensure a non-federal match is provided for this FRA grant funding, which is necessary to advance this important project.