

Portal North Bridge Project

Hudson County, New Jersey

New Starts Project Development

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The Portal North Bridge Project entails the construction of a new, two-track fixed structure bridge across the Hackensack River in Hudson County, New Jersey along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The existing moveable swing span bridge has only 23 feet of vertical clearance above the mean high water level and must pivot open to allow maritime traffic to pass through, closing the bridge to rail traffic interrupting operations on the NEC for both Amtrak and New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT). Additionally, the “miter rails,” which allow the rails to disengage and the bridge to open and close, permanently restrict speeds on the bridge to 60 miles per hour, while trains can operate at 90 miles per hour on adjacent portions of the NEC. These conditions create bottlenecks along the NEC, especially during peak commute hours. The new bridge will provide enough vertical clearance to accommodate current and forecast maritime traffic and allow trains to operate at higher speeds.

The Project is part of the Northeast Corridor Gateway Program, a series of strategic rail infrastructure investments designed to improve current service and create new capacity. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) currently serves as the project sponsor, but the Project is a joint undertaking that also includes Amtrak and New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT).

A Notice of Intent to initiate the environmental review was published in the Federal Register on December 12, 2006. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in February 2008, with the Final EIS published in October 2008. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in December 2008. The current schedule anticipates selection of a locally preferred alternative and its incorporation into the region’s fiscally constrained long range plan in 2017, entry into Engineering in the first quarter of 2017, receipt of a Full Funding Grant Agreement in the second quarter of 2018, and the opening for revenue service in the second quarter of 2024.