



## THE DAILY

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### Amtrak expresses interest in ARC tunnel plans

By João-Pierre Ruth

Though scrapped by Gov. **Chris Christie** last month, [plans for the trans-Hudson rail tunnel project](#) have caught the eye of federally funded Amtrak.

NJ Transit spokesman **Paul Wyckoff** said the agencies are in exploratory, preliminary talks, but could not provide details on any conversations. "These are sorts of discussions that would occur anyway," he said. "We're always talking with our sister agencies seeking infrastructure answers that are better for New Jersey."

Amtrak owns the Northeast Corridor rails, which are used by NJ Transit, Wyckoff said.

Amtrak spokesman **Cliff Cole** confirmed preliminary talks are under way, and said Amtrak wants to boost speeds on its existing high-speed rail line from 150 miles per hour to 220 miles per hour, with stops in Boston, New York and Washington, D.C. "Any opportunities we see that may help us jumpstart that program, we'll look into," Cole said. "There's a possibility that what New Jersey Transit has been working on in the ARC tunnel project may help us."

ARC, short for Access to the Region's Core, was an initiative designed to double the amount of rail capacity between North Jersey and Manhattan; it was to be financed by New Jersey, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the federal government. Christie killed the state's plan to build the tunnel citing potential cost overruns, which the Garden State would have to shoulder alone.

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Cole said Amtrak is looking at any and all possibilities at this stage. "It is way too early to say if this particular opportunity will work or not," he said. "It has to be an outcome that benefits both parties."

Christie spokesman **Michael Drewniak** reiterated that the ARC tunnel, as envisioned, is over, in e-mailed comments to the press, though he said the governor had asked **James Simpson**, his transportation commissioner, and NJ Transit Executive Director **James Weinstein** "to work with the pertinent partners to explore fiscally viable alternatives for a trans-Hudson tunnel. As such, we will continue to explore solutions to the trans-Hudson transportation challenge."

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