

Palmer Area Photo Locations

There are many interesting photographic opportunities in the Palmer, Mass area but describing them all is far beyond the scope of this guide. I've selected a some of my nearby favorite spots to the Palmer depot that are easy to find and do not violate trespass laws. A little exploring in these areas should provide many interesting images. With commonplace GPS and cell phone devices rather than spending time drawing elaborate maps we will provide the map coordinates and a brief description. We cannot be responsible for conditions..

It is worth mentioning a few unwritten rules of railfanning. First and foremost- **ALWAYS BE CAREFUL AND ALWAYS STAY OFF THE RAILROAD TRACKS AND EQUIPMENT!!! EXPECT A TRAIN AT ANY TIME IN ANY DIRECTION!** Model railroads are small, prototype railroads are not. They are big and heavy and they can be quietly dangerous. Be courteous to others at all times. Do not make it difficult for others to take photographs. Respect private property- ask permission to proceed if possible. To paraphrase the Appalachian Trail Guide- Take only photographs and leave only footprints. And be sure to have fun!

Suggested Photo Opportunities

1. Palmer Road- Three Rivers. 42.17681, -72.35858. The road closely parallels the New England Central line north from Worcester. Many possibilities in the vicinity during most of the day but best for south bound trains heading towards Palmer.
2. Palmer Depot- Depot St. It is the place to see all four railroads (CXSXT, Amtrak, New England Central, and Mass Central) possibly at the same time. The Steaming Tender Restaurant is quite friendly to railfans with ample parking. They open at 4:00 PM on Thursdays and Fridays, 12:00 noon on weekends. They feature good food at reasonable prices and are quite mindful of their railroad heritage. Be sure to try their bread pudding and whiskey sauce- www.steamingtender.com. There are a multitude of photo opportunities all day for trains of all four railroads in both directions. Here are a few we like. Palmer Depot- 42.15585, -72.32920. Former Boston and Albany freight house site- 42.15566, -72.32643. New England Central yard grade crossing- 42.15217, -72.32564.
3. South Main St., Palmer. Sanderson- MacLeod Brush Company. 42.15219, -72.32021. There are interesting locations behind the local industries if railroad cars are not blocking. Although we are trespassing on their employee parking lot, we have always felt welcome to be there- in the past employees have waved at us and said hello.
4. Hospital Road, Monson. 42.144987, -72.319484. Good views of Southbound New England Central trains leaving Palmer most of the day.

5. Bethany Road, Monson. 42.121014, -72.307771. Interesting morning shots of Southbound New England Central trains at the former Church (toilet) Seat factory. "The best seat in the house."
6. Junction of Rtes. US20 and MA67 bridge. 42.143789, -72.284125. Good morning angles for westbound CSXT trains.
7. Dunhampton- Palmer Road, West Brimfield. 42.14786, -72.26661. Many long morning possibilities for CSXT and Amtrak trains in both directions across farmlands. In the past, owners have permitted us to cross their fields.
8. Rt. MA67, Palmer. 42.15177, -72.27153. Long afternoon views of CSXT and Amtrak trains in both directions.
9. CP79, Washington Rd., Brimfield. 42.161540, -72.265276. Eastbound CSXT and Amtrak trains during most of the day at a railroad control point. It is hard to determine at what point the short access road and this former grade crossing becomes private property.
10. Washington Rd, Palmer, 42.175653, -72.260479. Good afternoon views of Westbound CSXT and Amtrak trains both from the bridge and the clearing just to the west of the bridge. Be sure to check out the concrete piers from the proposed bridge of the never completed Southern New England (Grand Trunk) in the vicinity of 42.169721. -72.261346. If the foliage is not too dense, it is worth the climb to the CSXT tracks. This is a dead-end road and you must backtrack to King's Bridge Road.

If you are willing to drive seven miles east on Rts. US20 and MA67 from Palmer Depot to West Warren, you will find two of our favorite locations in the area. The South St Bridge (42.211267 -72.234630) offers an interesting view of the Quaboag River and Wright's Mill for afternoon westbound and CSXT trains. If you drive around the back of the mill complex via Pulaski Street into the ungated rear mill entrance (42.211557, -72.232393) there is an interesting morning view of Eastbound CSXT and Amtrak trains. We obtained permission from the guard house years ago but we are uncertain if this is still valid. Workers have waved at us and seem friendly and we have never had an incident there.

Local Scanner Frequencies

CSXT- 160.800 (AAR 4646), 160.560 (AAR 3030), 160.680 (AAR 3838), Yard 161.070 (AAR 6464). Audible defect detectors at MP 89 (Wilbaham) and MP 75 (West Warren) can sometimes be heard. Many crews call signals at control points CP92 (Springfield), CP83 (Palmer Depot), and CP 79 (West Brimfield)

Mass Central- 160.575 (AAR 031), 151.400 (AAR 024)

New England Central- 161.415 (AAR 087), 161.205 (AAR 073)

Amtrak trains use the frequencies of their host railroads. Schedules and arrival times vary. Call Julie at 800- USA RAIL for up-to-date train information.