



## Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #3

### Thursday, March 28, 2024, 6:00 PM

### Held Virtually Via Zoom

### Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a third and final Public Information Meeting on March 28, 2024. At this meeting, the Study team shared an overview of the study's background, reviewed the study alternatives, outlined issues and opportunities to consider, presented draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan. Members of the public were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting.

### Meeting Notes

#### 1. *Welcome, Ground Rules, and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the third and final virtual public meeting of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how the public can participate. She then introduces the agenda for the meeting, which includes an overview of the study, review of alternatives, presentation of issues and opportunities for consideration, draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan, public comment, and finally next steps.

#### 2. *Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study overview and process, which includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory, and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

The Study team presents the goals and objectives for the Study, which are to:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity

- Minimize the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation
3. *Study Alternatives Review by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the two-phase alternatives development process. Phase 1 developed a “Lower Investment Alternative” and a “Higher Investment Alternative,” which were presented at the public workshop to obtain feedback. Phase 2 used that feedback to develop four additional alternatives for providing service along the corridor.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) opens with the Phase 1 alternatives. Alternative 1, *Lower Investment*, features five round-trip trains per day stopping at four stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, and North Station) and improvements to portions of the tracks and associated infrastructure. Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, also features five trains per day and the same four stations, with a higher level of infrastructure improvements that would allow faster train speeds.

She then introduces the Phase 2 alternatives, which were developed based upon stakeholder feedback from Phase 1. All the Phase 2 alternatives build on Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, and the faster service allowed by those track improvements. Alternative 3, *Electrified Service*, would feature electrified services via overhead catenary wire and stops at seven stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg, Ayer, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 4, *Full Local Service*, would feature stops at eight stations (North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 5, *Albany Extension*, would extend service to Albany, NY, serving seven stations (Albany and Schenectady in New York, North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 6, *Northern Tier Rail Link*, would provide service to North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, and Fitchburg, and require passengers to transfer to the MBTA Commuter Rail’s Fitchburg Line for service to North Station.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) presents the evaluation criteria used to compare the six alternatives: service frequency, number of stations served, eastbound travel times and how they compare to driving, maximum train speeds, environmental impacts, passenger rail impacts, freight rail impacts, community/safety impacts (e.g., grade crossings), estimated annual ridership, capital cost per mile and capital cost per rider, operating and maintenance cost per rider, transportation cost savings for riding versus driving, annual reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT), and economic impacts from construction of the new service (e.g., track improvements, new stations, etc.). He explains the factors that affect each item (e.g., stopping patterns and estimated ridership) and how the total estimated cost for each alternative was determined. He reviews the total costs for the alternatives and explains the total capital cost and the total annual operations and maintenance costs. He then discusses the benefit-cost analysis (BCA). He states that the key takeaways are that all alternatives are estimated to provide connectivity, mobility, and choice, and are estimated to provide positive environmental and economic impacts. He notes that Alternatives 3 and 4 generate the highest ridership levels and the measurements associated with them, including transportation cost savings and VMT reduction.

#### 4. *Issues and Opportunities by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the governance (who will oversee existing or new intercity passenger rail service within the Commonwealth) was examined by the Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission, which recommends that current and new intercity passenger rail services should be developed and operated by MassDOT.

She discusses Compass Rail, a regional rail network initiative for east-west and north-south rail services in Massachusetts. She notes that this is intercity rail (not commuter rail) and is administered by MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division, which partners with Amtrak, CSX, and abutting states.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) discusses access considerations and notes that the host railroads and the passenger rail operator would need to consent for service to occur and to obtain federal funds. She also discusses the existing infrastructure, stating that there are many unknowns regarding how repairs or improvements to bridges, tunnels, etc., might affect the cost. Cost estimates include contingencies, but costs could still increase due to unknowns.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) discusses the current population projections and how population trends affect ridership projections. He states that population at the western end of the corridor is projected to decline while population at the central portion of the corridor is expected to increase modestly. He notes that pandemic-related changes in population and travel patterns could be further evaluated.

He discusses the intersection of housing and transportation, and what supporting infrastructure may be needed - such as impacts on schools, local businesses, and tourism opportunities. He then presents potential funding opportunities, including federal funding programs, state funding programs, and local funding and financing programs.

#### 5. *Draft Recommended Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the draft recommended next steps for the Study, which are to:

- Continue to improve understanding of travel demand along the Northern Tier corridor, corridor segments, and linkages to key regional destinations;
- Continue to advance planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities, including at potential station locations;
- Explore scheduled motor coach service to Northern Tier corridor destinations;
- Evaluate alternative phasing or implementation strategies;
- Evaluate express service between Fitchburg and Boston;
- Monitor freight use and trends in the corridor to explore needs/opportunities for public investment; and
- Develop strategies for improving rail connections within the corridor to meet study goals of supporting economic development, transportation equity, and minimizing impacts to public health and the environment.

6. *Draft Implementation Plan by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces the draft implementation plan and the six-step project development process of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) from planning through operation. She mentions that the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study falls under the earliest stage of this implementation process (systems planning) and presents a sample implementation timeline.

7. *Public Comment by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the floor to questions and comments from elected officials and members of their staff in attendance.

Andrew Fitch, North Adams City Councilor, asks why trains would be limited to 80 mph, how people in North Adams can be most effective in advocating for train service, and expresses support for the Albany Extension option because of the tourism and academic institution draws and the potential to improve traffic from New York City.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the 80-mph speed limit is due to the class of track and the associated speed limit.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) describes the ridership estimation process and the data used to assess trips. He adds that train speeds are also limited due to the curved alignment of the Northern Tier corridor as well as the track class.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) adds that stakeholder engagement is necessary to advance the process to develop projects and move from planning into projects.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Ashley Shade, North Adams City Council Vice President, who asks about estimated ticket costs.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that fare planning and policy would be developed further along in project planning and fares would depend partly on how the system would be overseen.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: how many people are participating tonight?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) responds that there are currently 240 attendees.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: In terms of the recommended next steps, does MassDOT have the funding necessary to undertake this work?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that some federal programs offer grants for additional planning and preliminary design activities and notes that the Federal Railroad Administration has grants for intercity passenger rail projects.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: What was the BCA for West-East rail service from Pittsfield to Boston?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the design and construction costs were high, and estimated ridership was low. Paul Nelson (HNTB) (later in the meeting) states that the BCA was not above 1.

Virginia Desorgher, Mayor of Greenfield, says that Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service would be a game-changer and encourages the effort to move forward.

David Martin, Acton Select Board, asks about synergy or overlap with Commuter Rail electrification especially with Alternative 3. He asks about cost implications and, if not electrification, will it be diesel locomotives in areas where Commuter Rail has been electrified?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the study assumes that MBTA would electrify Commuter Rail and did not include the electrification of Commuter Rail territory as part of the Northern Tier study or its costs. She mentions that any initial Northern Tier services could be diesel.

Senator Jo Comerford encourages stakeholder engagement to gain the game-changing aspects of this rail service, and states that the entire Northern Tier state delegation is united in support of moving forward at the fastest pace possible.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Lora Wondolowski, Greenfield City Councilor, who asks who will take the lead in applying for the federal grants mentioned?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that federal grants are very specific in identifying who can apply for them and partnerships around rail service can also apply and be rewarded. He notes that a key to many of the grant applications is to get letters of support.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) then opens the questions to members of the public in attendance.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Joe, who asks if the reason the Albany Extension ridership estimate is so low is because it only counts people using that section?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that there is competing service on the Albany-Boston route, plus the route is circuitous and therefore slower than other services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Joe, who states that at last week's session someone advocated for service to Williamstown, and he agrees with that addition and would also like to see a station in Charlemont to serve the recreational businesses there.

Carl Sailor mentions having heard that passenger lines can attract ridership not necessarily from car trips, but from people who wouldn't have travelled otherwise and asks if there is anything in place, similar to an advertising campaign, to attract new ridership from car users.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that a marketing campaign would generally happen closer to the opening of a service in the year or so before it would begin.

Halley Kelly asks how theoretical fares are considered when estimating ridership.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that fare prices were not considered in determining ridership at this point; the attractiveness of the service, travel time comparisons, and changes in population were considered. She mentions that generally fares and fare policy are set further along in the process.

Marcel LaFlamme mentions Compass Rail and wants to make sure that the needs of the Northern Tier are not subsumed under a Springfield service model.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Tracy, who asks about parking fees not being factored into Albany estimated ridership.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that parking fees in Albany were not considered as part of the transportation cost savings.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Aimee, who asks whether grants or incentives for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> or particulates might apply to Alternative 3 and, if so, have those been factored into the cost estimates?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) replies that revenue sources have not been incorporated into the cost estimates and notes that the cost estimates represent the cost of making the infrastructure improvements.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Alice, who asks about whether improved electrification could be added later for Alternative 4?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that catenary could be added later and is feasible, and notes that service would have to be adjusted while the work is being done.

William Quale echoes Mayor Desorgher's comments that this service will be a game-changer for communities in Franklin County and asks about future demand and the potential for higher frequency in the future.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that intercity passenger rail services such as this one generally have lesser frequency, which is why the study looked at five trains in each direction per day. She mentions that the impact and cost of additional trains could be further analyzed for future decision-making.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Rauley, who asks, did the economic benefit estimations of Alternative 3 take the follow-on benefits of electrification of the MBTA Fitchburg Line into account?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that both the benefits and the costs of the MBTA territory being electrified were not calculated.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Halley, who asks, do the avoided emissions include healthcare costs from inhaling emissions or just environmental damages?

Price Armstrong (Cambridge Systematics) responds that the values that went into the BCA for the emissions benefits take health benefits into account as defined by and in conformance with the federal guidelines.

Arthur Millet asks about how people from smaller towns will get to and from the stations and if there is anything to solve the last mile issue.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that these types of infrastructure and services would need to be planned and implemented as part of any service in collaboration with cities and towns, as well as regional transit authorities.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) adds that this response also answers a question from Hugh in the Q&A queue regarding plans to integrate train station service with RTA bus services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Richard who asks, will the Pan Am Southern track be considered an MBTA service where MBTA Communities Laws apply?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that this is intercity passenger rail service and notes that both intercity and commuter rail are defined in federal law and are treated differently with different funding sources and different governance structures. She mentions that, as this would be a corridor for intercity passenger rail, it would not be subject to a statute that governs the MBTA Commuter Rail services.

James Mussoni asks about the local service option and if the Gardner station and tracks there would need to be upgraded, as Gardner was once part of the MBTA in the late 1900s.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the tracks between Fitchburg and Gardner are part of the Pan Am Southern territory and that it was used with permission of the freight railroad back then. She recalls that the site of the former Gardner station may not be a good location for a station, as standards for passenger stations are now different from then.

Sidney Rothstein expresses support for the project and asks, as more study is done, what are the possibilities for expanding the analysis of economic development and including more robust measures of economic development and growth that might be spurred by the project. Sidney

also states that there may be significant differences in post-pandemic patterns that would lead to different projections.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that the benefit-cost analysis is a very rigid tool and notes that the benefits depend on who the riders are, how much they are saving in travel time, and the use of a different mode of travel. He mentions Devens, Fitchburg, and Worcester as some case studies as a start to assessing what the additional elements of economic development could be.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads questions from Allen and Helen, who both ask whether combining Alternatives 3 and 4 (electrification and full local service) is a possibility.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that that is a possibility, and that as part of the systems planning phase, the alternatives can be refined where new or merged alternatives could be developed based on stakeholder engagement.

David Kechley expresses support for the Albany extension and asks, how soon can the service get started?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) refers to the discussion about the FRA service development process. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) adds that additional planning steps could be taken and, as funding and resources to perform the work are identified, discussions with railroad partners would begin. She notes that the host railroads and Amtrak would need to be on board with the service. She mentions that these partners would then work together on further modeling of the preferred alternatives and that the permitting process would begin as part of the project design process. She states the need for additional planning in order to refine the alternatives and to start to get into project identification.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Carl, who recalls hearing that there would be an attempt to synchronize arrival in Greenfield with Amtrak's Vermonter service and asks if there is a possibility of an increase in the Valley Flyer service, especially northbound during the daytime hours.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that schedules were developed around different parts of the day, and actual schedules would be intended to coordinate service between different routes to allow people to use multiple services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) again thanks everyone for their participation, and states that the meeting time is being extended to allow for more questions.

Myra Ross states that as a blind person, she currently has limited travel options and is supportive of this project. She adds that service from Albany to Boston through Greenfield is not fast or useful because there is so little of it and mentions the long travel time from Amherst to Boston. She encourages continuing to push for Northern Tier service and continuing to enlist the support of communities along or near the corridor.



Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Dale, who asks, how do the regional planning commissions intersect with this process now and going forward, in relation to parking and coordination with regional transport.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that MassDOT has been coordinating with regional planning agencies throughout the life of the project and that would continue.

Jean and John McClellan ask if anything can be learned from Japan, Europe, and China about how to expedite the timeline of this idea.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that there may be construction methods and other insights that could be learned and points out that the processes for taking into account the interest of stakeholders differs. She adds that Europe and Japan have great high-speed rail that could be learned from technically, but for planning a railroad and beginning to construct it, there are systems in place with particular governance and funding structures.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from John Garrett, Greenfield City Councilor, who expresses support for the project, and asks if there is a plan to electrify the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line out to Wachusett.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the MBTA is both committed and obligated to decarbonize its system and that while the cost of MBTA electrification was not included within the Northern Tier costs, it was assumed that it would occur.

Pam Harty asks why the ridership estimates for the electrified option were double and wants to learn a bit more about why.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) clarifies that the estimated ridership is between 196,000 and 304,000. He explains the relationship between the number of stops and the estimated ridership, which is why Alternatives 3 and 4 show higher ridership, and that travel time is also a factor.

Roy Kimmel asks about if the effort would be federally funded or strictly a state funded project, and if this will occur simultaneously with the effort to improve train service from Boston to Pittsfield. Roy also asks about who would operate the Northern Tier service.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that it could be a combination of federal, state, and local funding. She mentions that the operator would be Amtrak because Amtrak runs nearly all intercity passenger rail service in the United States. She also notes that both the East-West and Northern Tier rail efforts are currently progressing at the same time but are at different stages.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks Anna M. Barry (HNTB) to share more about Amtrak's rights of access. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that Amtrak's enabling act gave it the right to access any railroad right-of-way in the country at a certain price level and that freight railroads and the MBTA are obligated to allow Amtrak to operate intercity passenger rail service on their rights-of-way for a negotiated cost.

Carl Sailor states that the presentation mentioned that the service is planned for five round trips per day and that Amtrak's Downeaster was referenced as an example, and asks what circumstances would cause service to be increased.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that intercity rail services generally start with a smaller number of daily trips and that, while the Downeaster also began with a smaller number of trips, the five trains a day was based on a schedule to serve the types of trips that riders on the Northern Tier are likely to be taking. She mentions the stakeholder communities and funding as additional factors.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that there are five minutes left in the meeting and mentions that this is not the only opportunity to submit comments and questions. She states that additional questions may be submitted via the comment form on the study website and that responses will be provided for the questions in the Q&A. She then transitions to next steps.

#### *8. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks everyone for their input and states that the feedback will be used to develop recommended next steps. She states that the study process will be documented in a draft report which will be released for public review and comment and finalized in a final report. She adds that notifications will be sent out once the draft final report has been released and encourages attendees to sign up for updates if they have not done so already.

She encourages attendees to visit the website to continue the conversation, reiterates that all comments and questions will be available on the website with responses, and notes that materials from tonight's meeting will be made available on the website as well. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) wishes everyone a good rest of their evening and concludes the meeting.

## **Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #3 Attendees**

### **MassDOT/Study Team:**

- Makaela Niles - MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry - HNTB
- Paul Nelson - HNTB
- Sara Stoja - HNTB
- Price Armstrong - Cambridge Systematics
- Dan Tempesta - Cambridge Systematics
- Branner Stewart - UMass Donahue Institute
- Sofia Clark - HDR | City Point Partners
- Joe Sgroi - HDR | City Point Partners

**Working Group Members & Alternates:**

1. Jo Comerford - State Senator
2. John Barrett - State Representative
3. Ginny DeSorgher – City of Greenfield
4. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
5. Thomas Matuszko - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

**Public Attendees:**

1. Francis Abuisi
2. Andrew Achenbach
3. Andreas Aepli
4. John Anhalt
5. Deborah Arak
6. Jennifer Atlee
7. Robert Baker-White
8. Trenton Barnes
9. Keith Barnicle
10. Daniel Barowy
11. Zach Bauer
12. Karen Benko
13. Freda Bennett
14. Joe Bergeron
15. Tom Bernard
16. Mell Bissell
17. Brad Bissell
18. Julia Blyth
19. Alice Bojanowski
20. Christopher Bolton
21. Laura Botkin
22. Stephanie Boyd
23. Colin Bratton
24. ralph Brill
25. Karuna Burgess
26. Harold Burnett
27. Deborah Burns
28. Fanely Caba
29. Rauley Caine
30. Mary Carey
31. Beth Carlisle
32. Barbara Carr
33. Charles Chandler
34. claire chang
35. Laura Chapdelaine
36. Julia Chevan
37. Laura Christensen
38. Bill Christian
39. Joe Cleary
40. Susan Cloutier
41. Stuart Cohen
42. Shannon Collins
43. Ben Comeau
44. John Compton
45. Tracy Compton
46. Paula Consolini
47. Donna Consolini
48. Gildo Consolini
49. Matthew Cooperman
50. Christine Copeland
51. Jared Cowing
52. Gregory Cox
53. Melissa Cragg
54. Bette Craig
55. Anne Crider
56. Janet Curran
57. Maeve Curtin
58. Mike Curtin
59. Zoe Danger
60. Tammy Daniels
61. Drew David
62. Karen K Davis
63. j Deery
64. brie Della Rocca
65. CM Deucher
66. Ellie Deveaux
67. David Dewey
68. Armando DiCianno

69. Matthew DiGennaro	114. Helen Harrison
70. Jessica Dils	115. Liz Hartung
71. Dina Dommett	116. Pam Harty
72. Pam Dorwin	117. Donna Haskins
73. Anne Doyle	118. Laurie Heatherington
74. Abigail Drury	119. Ben Heckscher
75. Stephanie Duclos	120. Geoffrey Hedden
76. Patricia Duffy	121. Kate Heekin
77. Colleen DuroShea	122. Gretchen Heinle
78. Martha DuroShea	123. Robert heller
79. Kenneth Dymond	124. Fred Heyes
80. Holly Edwards	125. Ziporah Hildebrandt
81. Morgan Everett	126. Edward Hines
82. Pete Farwell	127. Cecilia Hirsch
83. Tim Faselst	128. Jennifer Howard
84. Michelle Faselst	129. Brij Howard-Sarin
85. Lynne Feldman	130. roger hoyt
86. Jill Fenner	131. Wendy Hudson
87. Stephen Ferguson	132. rebecca hull
88. Andrew Fitch	133. Tom Hutcheson
89. Kay Flatten	134. Brian Intraversato
90. Antonia Foias	135. John Ireland
91. Lucia Foley	136. Amy Johns
92. Leo Franceschi	137. Oliver Jones
93. Claudia Frigeri	138. David Kechley
94. Susan Galereave	139. Halley Kelly
95. Sarah Gardner	140. roy kimmel
96. John Garrett	141. Cathleen King
97. Lynda Geraci	142. Susan Kohut
98. Elizabeth Giannini	143. Jim Kolesar
99. Jaye Glenn	144. Alison Kolesar
100. Laurie Glover	145. William Kolis
101. david grace	146. Surya Kotapati
102. Virginia Grant	147. Matti Kovler
103. Thomas Green	148. Cathy Kristofferson
104. Dan Greenberg	149. Joe Kurland
105. David Greenberg	150. Kenneth Kuttner
106. Carrie Greene	151. Larry Kuttner
107. Janet Gross	152. Dale LaBonte
108. Nancy Grossman	153. Marcel LaFlamme
109. Susanne Hale	154. Benjamin Lamb
110. Katherine Hand	155. Chris Larabee
111. Martha Hanner	156. Leah Larkey
112. Elaine Hantman	157. Pat Larson
113. Jacob Harrington	158. Richard LaVigne Sr

159.	Renee Lazaras	204.	Barbara Pearson
160.	Joan Levy	205.	Julia Pedroni
161.	Kerry Li	206.	Peter Pedroni
162.	Paul Lipke	207.	John Pelletier
163.	Zuri Mabrey-Wakefield	208.	Tim Petersen
164.	Molly Magavern	209.	Sally Petersen
165.	Jim Mahon	210.	Mary Peterson
166.	John Maloney	211.	Joann Phelan
167.	Sarah Manley	212.	Judith Phillips
168.	Gerald Marcanio	213.	Fiona Picone
169.	Christopher Marcisz	214.	Shelley Pierce
170.	MaryDelia Marshall	215.	Carson Poe
171.	Richard Martin	216.	Allen Pope
172.	David Martin	217.	Emily Power
173.	Martha Marvin	218.	Pam Predmore
174.	Andrea Massar	219.	Read Predmore
175.	Hilary Matheson	220.	Max Prum
176.	Jean and John McClellan	221.	Kali Puppolo
177.	Teresa McHugh	222.	Christa Pylant
178.	philip mcknight	223.	Hugh Pyle
179.	Kathleen McKnight	224.	Tim Pyper
180.	Peter Mehlin	225.	Mikael Pyrtel
181.	Rosemarie Meissner	226.	William Quale
182.	Arthur Millet	227.	Leo Quigley
183.	Susan Milliken-Rogers	228.	Jay Racela
184.	Quincy Morgan	229.	daniel racicot
185.	Ronan Murphy	230.	Danielle Ramdath
186.	James Mussoni	231.	Aimee Reische
187.	Diane Nassif	232.	todd reynolds
188.	Dawn Nelson	233.	Kate Richardson
189.	Carolyn Ness	234.	Clint Richmond
190.	Dawn Nims	235.	Paul Richmond
191.	David Nixon	236.	Molly Rideout
192.	Adrienne Nunez	237.	John Ridgway
193.	Anne O'Connor	238.	Donna Riggs
194.	Gregory Olchowski	239.	Sarah Robertson
195.	Martin Omasta	240.	Steven Rockwood
196.	Marilyn O'Neil	241.	Dana Roscoe
197.	Patricia O'Neill	242.	Myra Ross
198.	James Paleologopoulos	243.	Sidney Rothstein
199.	Barbara Palmer	244.	Joanna Rueter
200.	Betul Pamuk	245.	Carl Sailor
201.	David Paquette	246.	Mario Sassi
202.	Christopher Parker	247.	Renee Schiek
203.	Dan Peacock	248.	laura schoenbaum

249.	Shaun Schofield	283.	S. Vaithee Swaran
250.	Mawusi Sefogbe	284.	Debra Van Deusen
251.	Christine Seibert	285.	Robert Van Deusen
252.	Sara Seinberg	286.	Matthew VanHeynigen
253.	Carolyn Sellars	287.	Sarah Vega-Liros
254.	Ashley Shade	288.	Lee Venolia
255.	Christopher Silvia	289.	Carrie Waara
256.	Anne Skinner	290.	David Wagner
257.	Andrew Smith	291.	Kara Walsh
258.	Tom Smith	292.	Stephen Warley
259.	Elizabeth Smith	293.	Jennifer West
260.	David Smythe	294.	Kaatje White
261.	Amy Sosne	295.	Rob White
262.	Ben Sosne	296.	Gareth Williams
263.	Dorothea Sotiros	297.	Kira Williams
264.	Laini Sporbert	298.	Luke Williamson
265.	Donald Sprague	299.	karin winter
266.	James Starkey	300.	Chris Winters
267.	Lauren Stevens	301.	Alan Wolf
268.	Suzanne Stinson	302.	Peggy Wolff
269.	Kennedy Strakose-Griffin	303.	Tom Wolff
270.	Lenore Styler	304.	Lora Wondolowski
271.	Mallory Sullivan	305.	Scott Wrigley
272.	Linda Sweeney	306.	Caleb Wursten
273.	Jennifer Swoap	307.	Elaine Yanow
274.	Desiree Taylor	308.	Li Yu
275.	Jane Tekin	309.	Mark Zaccheo
276.	Audrey Thier	310.	Chelsea Zhang
277.	Sean Thomas	311.	Wendy Zunitch
278.	Laurie Thomsen	312.	Zoom User
279.	Peter Thomsen	313.	Zoom User via Phone 1
280.	Claire Ting	314.	Zoom User via Phone 2
281.	Eva Tracy-Raeder	315.	Zoom User via Phone 3
282.	carolyn umlauf		

**Appendix A – Additional Public Comments Received**

Question	Asker Name	Answer
Hi, will we be able to receive this slide deck of very helpful information? Thank You!	David Dewey	Hi David, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</a>
I just wanted to mention that some people who wanted to be on this call unfortunately are not because of Maundy Thursday services. Thanks	Jim Mahon	Thank you, Jim.
I apologize if this has been discussed and I missed it. Are there analogous plans being developed for Springfield (or Worcester) to Boston (or is there no track available to work with)? If they are conceivable, how do they compare for financial feasibility?	Barbara Pearson	Hi Barbara, the East-West Passenger Rail Study assessed rail service alternatives along the Boston-Worcester-Springfield-Pittsfield corridor. For more information, please visit: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study</a>
Was their a choice of metrics for the benefit cost analysis or is it federally mandated? If it's not mandated why not include the impact on individual's health from driving? Not to mention the fact of climate change and it's devastating impact on the economy of places vulnerable to climate change?	John Garrett	The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs
there*	John Garrett	
Given the scarcity of public transportation options in western MA, would it be possible that the estimated real estate value increases extend over a greater geography than “normal?” Greatly appreciate this presentation, thank you.	Suzanne Stinson	As part of the alternatives development and analysis, catchment areas around potential stations were developed to assess trip-making and estimate ridership and related analyses.
Would there be a westbound train? I read that they want to do 5 eastbound trains a day, but what about Westbound trains?	j Deery	Hi j, yes westbound movements for trains would occur.
As a former school committee member during a time of declining enrollment, I	Joe Kurland	Thank you for your comments, Joe.

<p>see an increase in population as a boost to our schools. It would improve the cost per student numbers.</p>		
<p>The frequency of ice storms (vs. snow storms) has increased dramatically in the past few years as our climate changes within the northern tier towns. Do ice storms impact the Electric Service #3 Alternative more than the non-electric alternatives?</p>	<p>CM Deucher</p>	<p>Please note that Alternative 3 includes electrification elements, including overhead catenary.</p>
<p>Hi, thanks for all this! I wondered about the VMT modelling. In northern Berkshire County and in Franklin County, many people going to the Boston metro area do not take Route 2--they go down to MassPike and then turn east. Any surveys out there on this?</p>	<p>Jim Mahon</p>	<p>Please see the Public Meeting #1 presentation for information on North Adams to Boston route choice.</p>
<p>For the link option, is the existing MBTA schedule expected to absorb the additional riders arriving from the west for the transfer, or will additional MBTA capacity need to be considered to accommodate through passengers all the way to Boston?</p>	<p>Zoe Danger</p>	<p>Alternative 6 (the Northern Tier Rail Link) assumes the existing MBTA schedule for connection at Fitchburg.</p>
<p>Thanks for all your great work on this project so far! Can you share how your report will assess the potential “economic, employment, social and cultural benefits to Franklin and Berkshire Counties and the commonwealth as a whole” beyond the construction and property value impacts?</p>	<p>Paula Consolini</p>	<p>Please see the Public Meeting #3 presentation on slide 18 for estimated economic and employment information. As part of the alternatives development and analysis, attractors were identified and all alternatives were estimated to provide connectivity, mobility, and choice. The study’s report will document the study process, including the alternatives evaluation analyses.</p>
<p>P.S. I was quoting item viii in the legislative mandate for the study.</p>	<p>Paula Consolini</p>	
<p>I hope this can become reality, and I hope the Plan #3 Electrified rail is the one chosen. I have lived in Petersham, near Athol and Gardner for 46 years and in the beginning there was some</p>	<p>Karen K Davis</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Karen.</p>



<p>rail service from Athol/Gardner and it so sad to see it go. I think this area needs this rural development/transportation. Our area had the 5 or 6 Quabbin towns that were flooded to create the Quabbin reservoir , and now these rural communities that are left deserve some resources. PLEASE DO THIS KarenDavis</p>		
<p>Just a comment: I work at Williams College (and worked at MCLA for 11 years) and don't have a handle on ridership numbers, but this would be so beneficial to our students from the greater Boston area. Very excited to track the progress of this project (pun intended).</p>	<p>Kate Heekin</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Kate.</p>
<p>Any chance u could please go over again the overall economic impact ? i thought i saw on the chart that across the board it was negative ?</p>	<p>Marilyn O'Neil</p>	<p>Please see the Public Meeting #3 presentation for evaluation summary, benefit-cost analysis, and additional information.</p>
<p>are copies of this presentation available</p>	<p>Francis Abuisi</p>	<p>Hi Francis, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</a></p>
<p>Does the negative Benefit-Cost ratio suggest a low likelihood of implementation?  The slide suggested none of the alternatives would be competitive for "discretionary grants under current federal rules."</p>	<p>Caleb Wursten</p>	<p>Regarding the benefit-cost ratio, changes to the project's characteristics, conceptual costs, and benefits may impact the benefit-cost analysis. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.</p>
<p>Would there be a westbound train? I read that they want to do 5 eastbound trains a day, but what about Westbound trains?</p>	<p>j Deery</p>	<p>Hi j, yes. Westbound train movements would occur.</p>
<p>Does "5 trains daily" mean 5 trains each way or 2 trains one way and three trains the other way?</p>	<p>Robert heller</p>	<p>The proposed alternatives each were developed to provide five round-trips.</p>

<p>Comment (no reply necessary): I am very impressed with the thoughtful and well informed professionalism behind these studies, and I am grateful for this public presentation. Any of options 2-5 would be wonderful (#1 and #6 would not merit the money or effort). I strongly support this important initiative to bring passenger rail to the North Adams-Boston corridor. Thank you.</p>	<p>David Wagner</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, David.</p>
<p>Do you have an energy use estimate with each alternative?</p>	<p>Patricia O'Neill</p>	<p>An assessment of estimated energy use could potentially be examined as part of this or any future planning activities.</p>
<p>Also, appreciate the analysis that the addition of rail may lead to an increase in population instead of decline in Western MA. This is a really important point.</p>	<p>Lora Wondolowski</p>	<p>Thank you, Lora.</p>
<p>I don't have a question, but I wanted to express my strong support for this project. I don't think the extension to Albany makes sense at this point. But Alternatives 3 and 4 seem the best from the perspective of a resident in Williamstown, MA.</p>	<p>Antonia Foias</p>	<p>Thank you, Antonia</p>
<p>Did the build/operation costs for Alternative 3 (electrified) only evaluate adding overhead catenary on the existing freight right of way or was a sub alternative explored for electrifying the vehicles themselves instead? Hydrogen fuel cell trainsets (currently built in America) can offer zero emission transit with the needed range without the large upfront capital required -- was that option evaluated as part an "electrified" alternative?</p>	<p>Rauley Caine</p>	<p>Rolling stock costs associated with overhead electrification were estimated.</p>
<p>Discount at 7% for East-West vs 3% for Northern Tier?</p>	<p>Leo Quigley</p>	<p>The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs. Please note that carbon dioxide</p>

		emissions is the only metric discounted at the 3% rate.
Thank you for this careful work. I'm confident that my household in Williamstown would make use of this service.	Jim Kolesar	Thank you, Jim.
I think this service is a huge improvement to all the communities this serves! Also I think more local government advocacy for the rail service would help gain community support for the implementation as well. In addition what is the time line for the implementation of the rail service.	Matthew DiGennaro	Thank you, Matthew.
What kind of improvements (if any) would need to be done at North Station in Boston in order to accomodate the new trains on this route?	Ben Comeau	The alternatives assumed no modification to MBTA infrastructure.
Can you clarify how tourism (either westward bound or eastward bound) is or isn't included in the estimated possible ridership in the different alternatives?	Molly Rideout	One of the objectives of the study was to improve connectivity and access to destinations (e.g., jobs and services, academic institutions, tourist attractions, etc.). As part of the alternatives development and analysis, attractors were identified and catchment areas around potential stations were developed.
Can you describe where the layover in North Adams would be and how large the yard would be?	Leo Quigley	Considerations related to a potential layover facility are included in the Public Workshop presentation on slide 56.
We are certainly in favor of Northern Tier Rail and its potential to support population growth in our smaller towns and its potential positive impact on our travel and tourism industries, as mentioned in the state's Economic Development Strategy. -Mikael M. Pyrtel, Director of Economic Development, Town of Orange, MA	Mikael Pyrtel	Thank you, Mikael.

<p>As someone who lives in Williamstown, I echo those sentiments (including the stop in Williamstown!). Between tourism &amp; higher education, there is a high level of interest in having train service to our region. Service from Boston with the Albany extension would be incredible. I strongly support the electric option (3, I believe) for the environmental and health benefits.</p>	<p>Christine Seibert</p>	<p>Thank you, Christine.</p>
<p>Following up on the question from the official from Acton, we should be aware of the new Amtrak standard locomotives known as the Siemens Charger, which are dual mode with both diesel and electric motive power.</p>	<p>Clint Richmond</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment, Clint.</p>
<p>YES to the Williamstown stop! It would also connect folks all along the route to the Clark art museum, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Peter Pan bus to NYC.</p>	<p>Kate Richardson</p>	<p>Thank you, Kate.</p>
<p>I fully support this project and look forward to taking the first train from North Adams to Boston.</p>	<p>Ashley Shade</p>	<p>Thank you for your support.</p>
<p>The Williamstown Stop would also connect folks from Southern Vermont via the Green Mountain Express bus service, which terminates in Williamstown</p>	<p>Kate Richardson</p>	<p>Thank you, Kate.</p>
<p>Is there a publically accessible, on-line location to view the information/data underlying the conclusions set forth in the charts displayed this evening?</p>	<p>William Kolis</p>	<p>Please see the Public Meeting #1 and Public Meeting #2 presentations for additional information. The study's report will document the study process, including the alternatives evaluation analyses.</p>
<p>I want to echo what others have said about how incredibly valuable this service would be to our rural communities allowing for increased business, recreation, and population. Also connecting the East and West could have such a profound impact on the state.</p>	<p>Patricia Duffy</p>	<p>Thank you, Patricia.</p>

<p>We are very supportive adding as many rail stops as possible in the corridor. We see having rail service as opening up the region to greater economic and population growth, and connecting the recreation opportunities to other parts of the state.</p>	<p>Sarah Vega-Liros</p>	<p>Thank you, Sarah.</p>
<p>Since the benefit cost ratio is low, I wondered if you looked at the expense and ridership of simply extending the Fitchburg line to Athol 5 times a day and to extend new trips from north Adam's and Greenfield to Springfield and Boston on lines with infrastructure already upgrades already underway</p>	<p>Christopher Parker</p>	<p>Regarding the benefit-cost ratio, changes to the project's characteristics, conceptual costs, and benefits may impact the benefit-cost analysis. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.</p>
<p>Could you share on Zoom the slide with the "scoring" of the alternatives again?</p>	<p>Suzanne Stinson</p>	<p>Hi Suzanne, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</a>.</p>
<p>I'd be thrilled if I could take my bike on a train out to the Berkshires and then bicycle back to Colrain.</p>	<p>David Greenberg</p>	<p>Thank you, David.</p>
<p>As another Williamstown resident, I also wanted to express my support for this project. I travel to Boston several times a month, and I am sure that not only will I use this service, but many of my neighbors will as well.</p>	<p>Elaine Hantman</p>	<p>Thank you, Elaine.</p>
<p>I just want to build one what others have said, this sounds like an awesome project! It will help communitys that are dieing to get new life! As a railfan myslef, this would be awesome to watch this line get more life!</p>	<p>j Deery</p>	<p>Thank you, j.</p>
<p>It seems unlikely the ridership/cost of construction analysis will support or justify the actual construction of passenger rail service to North Adams. Having said that as a business person in Berkshire County, I look at this</p>	<p>William Kolis</p>	<p>Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.</p>

project as an economic development opportunity. So, what can local businesses do to make known their thoughts on the economic importance of this project to the Berkshire Region?		
Another Williamstown resident in favor of this idea. Thanks!	MaryDelia Marshall	Thank you, MaryDelia.
I was late. Are the slides posted anywhere?	John Anhalt	Hi John, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</a>
According to the analysis I did, it would be faster to get to Boston from North Adams and Greenfield by going down to Springfield and East through Worcester to South Station	Christopher Parker	Please see the Public Meeting #1 presentation for information on North Adams to Boston route choice and average travel times.
As someone planning to move to Williamstown later this year, having a train service connecting Albany to Boston passing by our town really excites me. I really hope this project moves forward rapidly!	Betul Pamuk	Thank you, Betul.
Was there any thought about double-tracking the whole route?	John Ridgway	The study alternatives developed aimed to minimize or avoid impacts by remaining within the existing right-of-way.
There are dual mode — electric/diesel locomotives to use if the MBTA electrifies before the western sections.	Joe Kurland	Thank you for your comment, Joe.
As a Western Mass resident, I would absolutely love to see both the Northern Tier and the southern West-East rail created, with north-south connections, such as the Amtrak line between Brattleboro and New Haven. It would be a dream come true. I strongly support the enhanced local service to increase ridership and usefulness, and electrification. There are grants such as the CPRG that could be applied. We're moving in the	Helen Harrison	Thank you, Helen.

direction of electrification generally, and this would make the most sense for our climate and for forward-thinking infrastructure that aligns with our statewide renewable energy goals.		
5 trains a day in both directions? Or just in one way?	j Deery	Hi j. Both Eastbound and Westbound train movements would occur.
Many thanks to all involved in tonight's presentation. Another Williamstown resident expressing support for this project.	Hugh Pyle	Thank you, Hugh.
did the study consider making an offer to acquire the right-of-way from current owners? the budget for track upgrades is approaching the \$600M pricetag for the acquisition of Pan Am Railways, which includes other rights of way	Christopher Silvia	Please note that freight service would still continue to share tracks with passenger service regardless of ownership.
Given that there are a number of political leaders from Western Mass present, I would like to ask them if there are any plans to densify the areas around the new stations to increase walkability?	Carl Sailor	Please connect with community leaders for additional information.
I want to second those who have called for more stations, especially stations near recreational area. could this study include seasonal stations similar to the Amtrak downeaster old orchard Beach station?	Christopher Silvia	Service to additional markets may be potentially considered or explored in a future effort.
Please can you find out how the values of the health/environmental health cost benefits of electrification are calculated in the federal 'black box', and share them with us all?	Paul Lipke	The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs
This would be a game-changer for Western Mass. What a vision. Thank you for your hard work in analyzing the options and explaining them so clearly.	Chris Winters	Thank you, Chris.
thanks for the presentation. If travel time from Grennfiefl to N station was no more than two hours, I would never drive to Boston again. even	roy kimmel	Thank you for your comments, Roy.

<p>allowing for an additional 45 minutes to drive and park in Greenfield.</p>		
<p>As a member of our town Finance Committee, I know we continue to struggle to diversify our local tax base, and I would think that this project could be a very significant support to that. This would open up employment opportunities, particularly hybrid work opportunities, both retaining and attracting people to our community. How can we help and advocate further for this?</p>	<p>Suzanne Stinson</p>	<p>Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.</p>
<p>Will the track upgrades and construction require Eminent Domain to the thousands of homes stretching from Pittsfield to Greenfield to Leominster to Boston? And if not, then how can you possibly pull this huge rail infrastructure project off..?</p>	<p>Sean Thomas</p>	<p>The study alternatives developed aimed to minimize or avoid impacts by remaining within the existing right-of-way.</p>
<p>As a resident of North Adams, I feel this project would be hugely beneficial for the Berkshires, and the state in general. A North Adams or Williamstown stop would be particularly welcome.</p> <p>Train access to western Mass could help to alleviate high housing costs in Boston, as it would become possible to move further out from the city for daily commuters, especially those who work on a hybrid from home/in office schedule. A scenario similar to commuters taking Amtrak from NJ to NYC on a daily basis is not unimaginable.</p> <p>Further, a professor at Williams College, I would use the train to take my students to the major art museums in Boston for teaching purposes. I attended grad school in Boston and it is probable that educators there would</p>	<p>Trenton Barnes</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Trenton.</p>



use the train similarly, to bring students to view Mass MoCA and the Clark Art Institute. There are many similar opportunities for cultural and educational enrichment that may pertain to other fields.		
It's so nice seeing all of the people on here, advocating for Western, MA. Let's keep advocating for this project!	Andrew Fitch	Thank you for your support.
I hope thatt this project goes forward with a stop in Athol. It will be exciting to have train service along the Northern Tier Pat Larson in Orange.	Pat Larson	Thank you for your comment, Pat.
Speaking of stations, what is the plan for Greenfield where the current Amtrak platform serves only the north-south track with no access to the east-west track? The original Greenfield station used to be between those two tracks.	Joe Kurland	The study alternatives include proposed improvements, such as a new platform and reconfiguration of Greenfield Station.
Given the timeline you provided and the current stage of the project, what is the earliest projected year of the rail's availability?	Carrie Greene	A sample implementation timeline is included in the Public Meeting #3 presentation on slide 35. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.
Thank you so much for your hard work! We live in Greenfield and have a child who goes to school in Boston. She takes the train to Wachusett and we drive to pick her up when she wants to come home and do the reverse to send her back to school. A 2 hour train ride to Greenfield would be amazing, and many other families would benefit as well!	Shannon Collins	Thank you for your comments, Shannon.
As a resident of Berkshire County, I fully support this project! Thank you all for your planning and work on this.	Wendy Zunitch	Thank you for your comments, Wendy.
Just a reminder.... The residents in South Florida never thought "regular" people would ride the train. Please note that Brightline (public/private)	Alice Bojanowski	Thank you, Alice.

<p>goes between Miami and Orlando very successfully!! Thank you.</p>		
<p>Big Thank You to Paul for his thoughtful and detailed answers to the questions regarding the obvious need for a broader economic development benefit analysis beyond the project construction period benefits and the relatively narrow federal BCA guidelines. I would recommend MassDOT look at the public 2005 and 2023 Maine DOT economic benefit reports relating to the Downeaster Amtrak line that runs from Maine into Boston North Station and is coincidentally the same length of rail ine as NTIER. Many thanks again to MassDOT and their team for this call. - Tom Green, Williamstown</p>	<p>Thomas Green</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Thomas.</p>
<p>How will colleges and universities along the corrdor be engaged with to better understand the demands as noted in next steps?</p>	<p>Matthew VanHeynigen</p>	<p>Stakeholders, including colleges and universities, would continue to be engaged as part of any future efforts.</p>
<p>Fabulous work; thank you so much for all your hard work. I would love to see this project go forward. I sometimes drive to Wachusett to catch the commuter rail, but it would be much easier to catch a train from Greenfield.</p>	<p>Nancy Grossman</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Nancy.</p>
<p>What are the next steps specifically in terms of state government approval? Is another bill going to needed to be passed on beacon hill to get the new rail link authorized?</p>	<p>Halley Kelly</p>	<p>The draft recommendations aim to continue advancing the remaining conceptual planning phase for this effort. Following the completion of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, the final report will be filed with the clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Transportation.</p>
<p>There are no materials for today on the website except a flyer. Could you please post the slide deck. Thanks.</p>	<p>John Anhalt</p>	<p>Hi John, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video</p>

		recording) will be available on the study website: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study">https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</a>
No response required. I just want to thank you, all, for this excellent presentation and all of your hard work. Also, and this is just a small thing, but how cool would it be to once again travel by train through the Hoosac Tunnel!	Stephen Ferguson	Thank you, Stephen.
Thank you all for the presentation, questions, research and offering of information. The meeting is informative. The folks who have presented have been helpful. Makaela has been a delightful host.	Karuna Burgess	Thank you, Karuna.
This is VERY exciting! Another resident of Montague Center echoing the many comments on the game changing value of this rail to our area! Also have a strong preference for a new electric full local option (3+4). Also seconding Marcel LaFlamme’s questions/concerns regarding how we could have BOTH a Springfield centered path and a Northern path along Route 2. Our family’s sense is that people will make use of whatever is available, but if you build both paths there’s potential for MUCH more dramatic uptake meeting the needs of our diverse rural and urban populations – we’re curious to what extent ridership estimates and surveys account for what happens when the convenience goes WAY up (with connections between other services, more frequent trips etc, addressing last mile issues etc).  A separate concern - I do wonder about the impact of increased housing prices on existing residents in Western MA and how that could be considered	Jennifer Atlee	Thank you for your comments, Jennifer.

<p>and ameliorated (curious with regard to both Northern path and Compass rail)</p>		
<p>I echo all the thank yous, and absolutely, would use this service a few times a month for sure, from North Adams or Williamstown! Please let us know how we can help advocate for making this become reality!</p>	<p>Kenneth Kuttner</p>	<p>Thank you, Kenneth.</p>
<p>Thank you for a very informative presentation and process, which has been much improved from the initial planning of the Pittsfield to Boston route. As a western MA resident, it seems important to plan for north/south connections between the two lines, which would greatly increase their usefulness. Many local residents want to travel within this region, and not necessarily to Boston, and consideration of that perspective isn't always mentioned. Thank you!</p>	<p>Lucia Foley</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Lucia.</p>
<p>Thank you all so much for this forum and your work. When I see the bottom line on the chart for funding registering in the negative area, I wonder what can citizens do to help push the project forward despite the numbers coming up in the red? We all know that the almighty dollar speaks much louder than people who are struggling with transportation, I have hope that this could be overcome, and would value your guidance on what you've seen communities do to secure funding despite these kinds of charts.</p>	<p>Sara Seinberg</p>	<p>Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.</p>
<p>I share the view of others that this would be a game changer for western Massachusetts while supporting more sustainable economic development and higher quality of life in the metro Boston area. Thank you for your thorough work and for taking the extra</p>	<p>Paula Consolini</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Paula.</p>

<p>time tonight to bring people up to speed!</p>		
<p>I do not have a question but wanted to add another political /economic reason for strong support of the Northern Tier. In Williamstown (where I live) and the rest of Northern Berkshire County, we often feel disconnected and cut off from Boston and the eastern part of the state by the Hoosac Range. As a result, we turn to Albany for news and media, medical care, entertainment, jobs, and transportation hubs. Many of us know the NY governor’s voice better than our own governor’s voice. With passenger rail service to Boston (which we had in my childhood), our attention and loyalties would shift toward our own state capitol and our state would be much better knit together.</p>	<p>Deborah Burns</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Deborah.</p>
<p>I am highly concerned about our ability to be resilient in the coming decades with the onset of ecological collapse, minerals scarcity (certainly it is impossible to transition our entire energy use to renewables/rebuildables at our current scale) and increased likelihood of supply chain breakdown because of these constraints. I hope that beyond economic growth, there can also be some visioning of what responsible planned degrowth looks like in our communities and how that might interact with trnsportation — even just as a contingency.</p>	<p>Patricia O'Neill</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Patricia.</p>
<p>Speaking from Greenfield, there's tremendous support for west-east rail in western MA for so many reasons. Thank you for your hard work.</p>	<p>Christa Pylant</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, Christa.</p>
<p>Thank you all.</p>	<p>Joe Kurland</p>	<p>Thank you for attending, Joe.</p>