



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #1 Thursday, July 14, 2022, 6:00 PM Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Notes

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a Public Information Meeting on July 14, 2022. At this meeting, the Study team provided an overview of the updated Goals and Objectives for the Study, information from prior Studies, the current conditions of the corridor, and next steps for the Study. The meeting concluded with a discussion of issues and opportunities for consideration during the Study. 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 meeting 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. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the agenda for the Public Information Meeting.

2. *Study Background, Study Overview, and Study Goals and Objectives by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the Study background. Through Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct this conceptual Study to examine the statewide and regional economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges. The Study will aim to identify all necessary improvements to support passenger rail service between Northwestern Massachusetts and Boston.

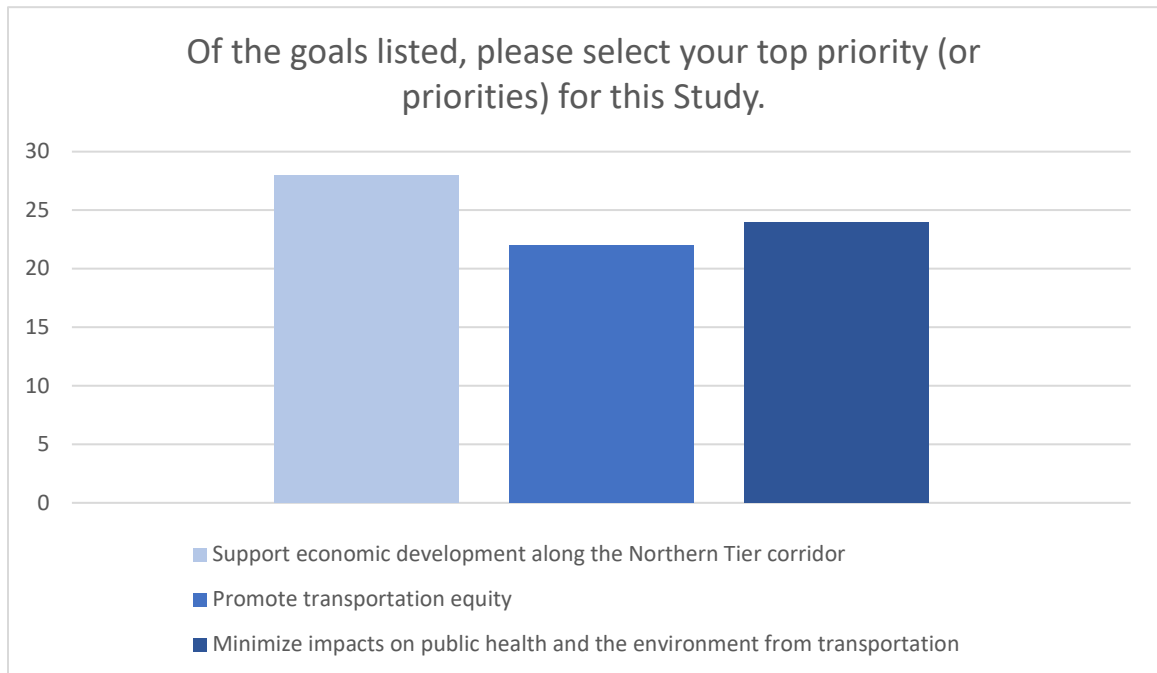
The Study process includes the following:

- 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

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the proposed set of goals and objectives for the Study and describes how the feedback from the first and second Working Group meetings was used to update and refine the goals to include the following:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity
- Minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

A poll is launched to better understand the attendees’ top priorities of the Study. Here are the results:



3. *Review of Past Efforts by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the past efforts. The Study team has reviewed 25 past efforts including passenger rail and transportation studies, municipal transportation plans/studies, and economic development studies. The Study team has also identified information related to demographics, rail infrastructure conditions, environmental resources, travel patterns and/or trends, as well as future conditions.

The key takeaways of this include the following:

- No previous corridor-wide evaluation of travel conditions along Route 2
- Most transportation planning has been focused more on local travel
- Opportunity for passenger rail service to tie into economic development efforts throughout the Study area
- Need a better understanding of travel pattern changes due to COVID-19

4. *Current Conditions: Market Analysis by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the corridor demographics (i.e., population, cost of living, zero car households and poverty levels, employment and economic development, tourism and major attractors, and the 2020 to 2040 socio-economic forecasts) and gives an overview of the overall travel patterns and travel by vehicle.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) notes the following from the demographic data:

- All data represents pre-COVID conditions (2019)
 - Full impact of COVID on society and travel patterns is still not fully understood
 - Study team will be monitoring trends tied to commuting patterns, other travel patterns, employment trends, etc.
- The Study team is using most current MassDOT-approved population and employment forecasts by UMass Donahue Institute
 - Updated forecasts that incorporate the 2020 Census and potential COVID impacts are in development

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the Northern Tier Analysis Sections, explaining that the Study team identified the different parts of the Study corridor as the Western, Central, and Eastern segments/zones. He reviews the following information:

- Total population: 1,751,000 (high growth in East between 2010-2022 and low growth and decline in West and Central)
- Total employment by corridor segment (89% in the East, 8% in Central, and 3% in the West)
- Partial list of major attractors that need to be considered when thinking about the different trip making patterns (the Study team will identify access issues and opportunities)
- 2020 to 2040 projected population changes: growth in job opportunities fuel population growth in East segment and slower growth in West and Central segments
- 2020 to 2040 projected employment changes include a concentration of new jobs in urbanized areas and a reduction in the employment pool because of the aging population and loss of younger workers in West and Central segments by 2040

Paul Nelson (HNTB) gives an overview of the data sources which include the following:

- Location-based Services (LBS) used to understand travel patterns:
 - StreetLight Data: anonymized location records from smart phones and navigation devices
 - INRIX: location-based data and analytics such as travel time and traffic conditions
- American Community Survey (ACS) Journey to Work: developed by the United States Census Bureau based on five-year average of survey results between 2015-2019

Paul Nelson (HNTB) highlights the following travel information:

- 29% of trips in Massachusetts have an origin destination in the Northern Tier communities
- Travel declined in all three segments in 2020 due to COVID-19
- Highest mode share for daily travel in the corridor (92% in the Central segment)
- 92% of household have access to a vehicle in West and Central segments
- Congestion delay is most prevalent between Fitchburg and Boston
- Primary travel is within the Route 2 corridor

Paul Nelson (HNTB) highlights the following from the travel patterns overview:

- Motor vehicles are the predominant mode of travel, especially west of I-495
- Most travel in the corridor is local (same county or adjacent)
- Travel volumes along Route 2 have grown closer to Boston but stagnated farther west
- Travel options beyond motor vehicle are limited west of Fitchburg

Market Analysis: Findings & Conclusions

- Lack of transportation options
 - Intercity travel choices west of Fitchburg are limited outside of personal vehicle use
- No unified corridor travel behavior
 - Trips leaving each segment more likely destined to communities outside the Route 2 Corridor
- Population and employment declines expected to decrease travel demand from Worcester County westward
 - Based on current projections, underlying demographic dynamics could reduce major growth in these areas of the corridor

5. *Current Conditions: Ownership, Operations, Right-of-Way by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that as of June 1st, CSX has acquired Pan Am Railways (PAR). She notes that Pan Am Railways' 1,200-mile rail network through New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine is now part of CSX's much larger 21,000-mile network, serving the eastern United States and parts of Canada. She mentions that CSX assumes PAR's half ownership of the Pan Am Southern LLC (PAS) and that PAS is a separate railroad jointly owned with Norfolk Southern that operates freight service from Ayer, MA into Vermont, and New York State, however PAS owns the right-of-way between Fitchburg and North Adams. She explains that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates commuter rail service out to Fitchburg with 34 daily passenger trains. Pan Am Southern/ Pan Am Railway operations on the Northern Tier consist of about 10 trains daily and dispatching responsibility does not always align with ownership. PAS performs dispatching on MBTA-owned stretch from Ayer to Fitchburg and the MBTA has the right to assume dispatching responsibilities under some circumstances.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) references several maps that show ownership, maintenance, and dispatching along the track, as well as the class of railroad track and allowable speeds. She notes that ruling grades are uphill grades that impose limits on the weight and size of a freight train, meaning this may require operation of lighter and more frequent freight trains, while heavier trains are slower on uphill grades, and both have an impact on passenger rail service. She also notes that there are 78 total active grade crossings, explaining that active warning devices typically include flashing lights and potentially gates, whereas passive warning devices typically include railroad cross-buck signs, stop signs, and other warning devices that alert a driver or pedestrian that a grade crossing is present.

6. *Issues and Opportunities Discussion by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

- Current conditions and issues simultaneously present potential opportunities and constraints, including the ownership of the corridors and the state of the right-of-way infrastructure

- CSX Acquisition may shift trains to B&A and may impose drawbacks such as new shared right-of-way requirements
- The current right-of-way could support passenger service, but it has been maintained for freight service with grades, curves, and single track that could limit the quantity or raise the cost of good passenger service
- Existing handoff between passenger and freight dispatching on the Northern Tier has been a successful model, but new ownership may change the model
- Many passenger train station locations may be able to host new stations
- Existing governance, regulatory and funding structures could support Northern Tier passenger service, including Amtrak access rights on freight railroads
- A new state Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Authority could promote development of new passenger services

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

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the next steps for the Study goals and objectives. Up to six service alternatives will be developed and evaluated through the Winter of 2023 and the Study is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2023. A workshop will be held in the Fall of 2022 to review the initial service plan alternatives, and formal working group and formal meeting announcements will be available through a few different channels including the Study website, social media, and email. She asks if there are any questions or comments from the Working Group and the public.

8. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), Anna M. Barry (HNTB), and Paul Nelson (HNTB)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the discussion up to members of the public in attendance for public comment. She reminds attendees to use the raised hand button to participate verbally and that they will receive a notification on their screen to unmute once they are recognized. She says that the question-and-answer (Q&A) box can be used to submit written comments and questions and ask the attendees participating by phone to dial star-nine (*9) to raise a virtual hand. She asks that people share only one comment or question at a time and limit comments to two minutes so the Study team can hear from as many people as possible about their thoughts on issues and opportunities that should be considered during the development of the potential service plans and alternatives. She clarifies that this is certainly not the only opportunity to comment, and that comments and questions can be shared throughout the Study process using the comment form on the Study website. She asks that any elected officials and members of their staff on the call share their questions and comments first.

Senator Joanne Comerford thanks the Study team for the presentation. She comments on the Western Massachusetts Rail Authority, saying that the Senate followed the House in authorizing language for a commission whose charge is to create a rail authority and legislation to be filed next session and that there is a bond earmark in there for regional rail for \$250 million. She explains that there is a great deal of promise and work embodied in that in both House and Senate members and appreciates that Anna raised that as one of the conditions. She thinks the delegation views it as a positive condition as they see the promise of federal infrastructure dollars for rail in western Massachusetts.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Senator Joanne Comerford for the comments.

Senator Anne Gobi thanks the Study team for the presentation and asks when the Study will be done.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says when the Study draft report is released for public comment, there will be a public review period and the final report will be released in the Spring of 2023. The alternatives development process will continue through the Winter, but the final report will be completed in the Spring of 2023. She thanks Senator Anne Gobi.

Senator Anne Gobi thanks Makaela for the clarification.

Representative Natalie Blais thanks the Study team for the presentation and appreciates how they have woven in the importance of the role that rail could play in western Massachusetts when it comes to economic development. She explains that they are at a crossroads when it comes to a rail network in western Massachusetts and says as we look at the knowledge corridor, the Berkshire Flyer has come into existence since the last meeting which is very exciting. She also mentions that by looking at the developments along the East West rail corridor, through Springfield, Pittsfield, Boston, this is an incredible opportunity along the Northern Tier and thanks the Study team for allowing for such a robust public participation process.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Representative Natalie Blais for the comments and for joining the meeting.

Carl McKinney thanks the Study team for their hard work and diligence. He asks if there has been any consideration not to dead end in North Adams but to go all the way to Albany, New York and possibly tie in Bennington, Vermont. He explains the reason for that is rail commuting because the greater Albany area is a standard metropolitan statistical area of 1 million people, and it is also the home of the Silicon Valley of the Eastern seaboard with good, high paying jobs and the prices in the Northern Tier area of real estate is significantly less than in metropolitan areas. He says if there is a way to move people efficiently with very few carbon emissions, then there would be additional rail traffic and it would also tie in with the North-South line going from the capital of New York down to New York City. He explains that when these lines were put in, the connection was between Boston and Buffalo, New York and stopping in Albany, so that connection has always been there and if this system can be rehabilitated and make it an efficient people-mover, it will be much more positive. He knows the Study must be done based on the data available to the Study team, but he thinks there is an opportunity to make this even better. He thanks the Study team and says he supports the Study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks Anna if she could expand upon the legislation and the potential stopping patterns that might be considered as the next part of the process is discussed.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the legislation mandates that passenger rail service from Boston to Greenfield and North Adams is analyzed and studied, however the scope gives the Study team the ability to expand that into New York. She explains that the line does go through Vermont, but the Study team is able to take feedback into account as the alternatives are determined and examined as the Study progresses. She notes that the Study team has a major focus on those two termini, but even with other towns on the corridor such as Athol and Orange, the Study team is open to what those alternatives should be.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says she appreciates the comments and responses from Carl and Anna.

Robert J. La Trémouille says he is pleased to see this initiative. He thinks it is a reasonable follow up to the South Coast initiative and would strongly suggest connecting Fall River and New Bedford as a future goal since there is an obvious community which extends over state lines.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Robert for the comment and says the South Coast Rail effort is currently ongoing in phase one and she shares a link in the chat for anyone wants to learn more about that project.

Joe Kurland asks if the complete StoryMap that was presented at the second Working Group meeting would be made available to the public.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Joe for the question and explains that the StoryMap from the second Working Group meeting is available on the Study website along with other meeting materials from previous meetings, including recordings of previous meetings.

Stephen Malagodi says he wants to second the remarks from the previous commentator about extending to Albany and thinks this is vital. He comments on the mode of transportation and remarks that no one mentioned if this would be an electrified service or old diesel and given that the second highest priority on the initial priority poll was for health and environment, he asks why there has not been any mention of this being an electric service rather than diesel.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that up to now, the Study team has been examining existing conditions on the railroad and have yet to address that issue. As the six alternatives are developed, there will four different service plans, types of equipment, and infrastructure to consider other than diesel and what there is now. She explains the alternative to provide double tracking, straighten out curves, add electrification, and to include various types of rolling stock can also be considered among the alternatives that the Study team explores.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Stephen and Anna for the question and response.

Representative John Barrett says he is hopeful that he will get \$5 million in the bond bill to move forward with any work that needs to be done, especially in the Hoosac Tunnel to make the repairs that have been discussed so far. He does not know how far the \$5 million will go, but he thinks it will ensure the integrity of some of the track in the area going through the Hoosac Tunnel. He also mentions the importance of something Paul referred to earlier in the presentation which is that along the line in western Massachusetts is the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Williams College, and MCLA in North Adams and Williamstown. He thinks it would be vital to have it in any report as far as transportation goes. He explains people have been using buses for years so by including this it could possibly change come of the data the Study team reviews considering there are approximately 3,000 students in the northern Berkshire area and 40,000 students at UMass, which is a university that also has yearlong sport events. He says he is very pleased with the timeline and progression of the Study. He thinks this rail will be an important part of the economy and future growth along the Northern Tier from Fitchburg west.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Representative Barrett for the comment.

Carl McKinney asks who owns the Hoosac Tunnel.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says it is owned by the Pan Am Southern Railroad which is owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Carl and Anna for the question and response.

Hendrix Berry asks what can voters do to help make the passenger extension from Boston to western Massachusetts happen.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains that participating in public information meetings is a good start. She suggests reaching out to community leaders and elected officials to share the projects that interest them. She thanks Hendrix for the question.

Andy Hodgeland says he appreciates all the work that has gone into this and shares a favorable impression of the Study so far. He expresses interest in having the Study area extend beyond North Adams into southern Vermont and into Albany. He thinks this has been a consistent theme and wants to make sure that data from southern Vermont is also used as the Study team reviews the West, Central, and East segments. He says there are a lot of potential riders in Bennington, across southern Vermont, and over to Brattleboro and he was not sure if this was included in the presentations. He encourages the Study team to expand the database north. He also says there is an opportunity for seasonal attractors, and he thinks this should be considered in the attractors analysis. There is a foliage season, Williamstown theater festival, Zoar rafting, and Berkshire East. He does not think these events could sustain a train, but they may sustain extra train service though the weekends. He says these seasonal events and special occasions are in the queue for the models.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Andy for the question and says the Study team will make sure to capture this in the analysis.

Mariah Kurtz thanks the Study team for being so thorough and for truly addressing conditions that affect Western Massachusetts and considering the caveats such as increased rail access changing residential and traveling patterns. She says this work is very important to the economic development and transportation equity of this area.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Mariah for the comment and says that these are certainly the goals of the Study. The Study team is looking to promote transportation equity, access, and mobility through this process.

Mark Shapp says he thanks MassDOT for this Study. He thinks the Northern Tier deserves the same level of attention as the implementation of a passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Springfield, and Boston. He comments on the fact that people can no longer get to Albany. He explains that the old Boston and Maine Railroad had a line that ran to Troy, and from there one could get to Rensselaer and says out that Amtrak's Albany station is across the river in Rensselaer. He also says there is a short industrial remnant of the old branch in Troy that is still in service with some freight customers, but the Boston and Maine line that went to Troy is gone, so he does not see how that could happen. He says that while he does not know the lay of the track in Greenfield, it seems to be a place where it could be a transfer to a Valley Flyer type of service that goes down from Greenfield to Springfield and from Hartford to New Haven and there may be people that need to go in that direction. He does not know whether the rail infrastructure in Greenfield lends itself to having across the platform connections between the two services. He also comments on how the old station in Williamston is a private property

and is three miles outside of the downtown area and three miles from Williams College. He says there should be a bus connection that could meet the trains.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the Study team will take this comment into consideration in the development of potential service alternatives.

Andrew Randazzo says historically, passenger rail in the United States has been significantly impacted by the prioritization of freight trains. He asks if there has been any consideration of installing an additional line dedicated to passenger service, and if not, why has it not been considered and what will be the strategy to reduce those barriers.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) agrees with Andrew, saying most of the passenger rail rights-of-way in the United States are owned by freight lines and it is something one must contend with when trying to create a passenger service. She explains the addition of second and third tracks and enhancing signal systems creates opportunities and there are ways to allow both to coexist and operate more effectively than just running them on the same track. One of the Study team's mandates is to make sure there is not unduly interference with freight service and the Study team will look at ways that allow freight to operate as they must on what they own and to find ways for a quality type of passenger service. She says it is possible to go so far as to create a new right-of-way, but as the alternatives are developed, the Study team will have to determine the practicality of it all and the costs in terms of modifying system right-of-way or creating new ones.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Andrew and Anna for the question and response. She says that John Orrison, a member of the Study team, could provide more insight to one of the previous questions from Mark.

John Orrison (HNTB) says Mark's statement about the Boston and Maine route no longer existing to Albany direct is correct. He says that there used to be a line that went straight into Albany once getting into the New York State area, but now there is a positive connection that is in place, which is moving westward on the Pan Am property or the Pan Am Southern. He explains there are connections to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and then there are connections to that are also in place to move downward and connect to the Amtrack ownership that goes into Albany. The route is a bit longer than the historical route, but there is a route the Study team could look to possibly analyze train operations to and from Albany.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks John for the response.

Carl McKinney says in connecting with Albany going through Greenfield and down to New Haven and then back up would not make sense for the Northern Berkshires. He does not think this option should be thrown out since a goal is to get people to where there are employment opportunities. He also says if three states are cooperating on this, there is a greater chance of getting stuff through Washington and getting more federal funding for this. Carl says his understanding is that the president is a big fan of passenger rail, but he thinks the goal is to consider both tourism and employment opportunities when discussing the use of the proposed passenger rail system.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Carl for the comments.

Daniel Cantwell says he supports trains to and from New York City, pointing out the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) as an attractor.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Daniel for the comment.

Brittany Polito asks if there is an estimated projected cost for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail and how will it be funded.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is currently developing service plans and alternatives. This includes what those services look like, how many trains, where will they go, where will they stop, what types of equipment do they use, and their speeds. Once the alternatives are established, there will be a workshop on a few of them in September. She explains that during this time, the alternatives will be evaluated, and the cost estimates will be developed in addition to other aspects that will be used to analyze the impacts the service plans would have. This includes the number of riders, how much economic development they generate, and this will be compared with costs for the various types of infrastructure, rolling stock, and other improvements needed to achieve any service plans.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Brittany and Anna for the question and response. She says a question submitted in the Q&A box starts with seconding the idea to continue into to continue to Bennington and Albany, but also asks about the timetables. She asks if Anna if she could speak about the development with that and the considerations of connecting to other services in the area.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains the Study team is looking at up to six alternatives and those alternatives will include where they begin, where they end, what the various stops are in between, the types of equipment that will operate, and what kind of connections. She says some things that must be taken into consideration is why people want to use the trains and the types of connections people have mentioned. These include connections at Greenfield, with the possibility of local bus connections along the way, Fitchburg, and Springfield between the Amtrak service that currently operate through Massachusetts on the CSX line. She explains all these factors will be considered as part of the service plans that are put together, and the best of each will be used to show the different types of services that could be used to develop those alternatives.

John Orrison (HNTB) says the Study team is currently analyzing the connection opportunities in Greenfield for the North South. For the Vermonter there are two, on train each way a day and the Amtrak plan is to increase that frequency to two each way. The Study team is also looking at the connections for the Valley Flyer train. He says once you get into Boston, in terms of being able to make a connection to the Downeaster, they currently have five trips each way a day. The Study team is aiming to make it as well knit into the transportation modes, so comments and questions from the public are welcomed and will be considered in this process.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them for their responses.

Ben Westbrook says he lives in North Adams and would certainly ride the train to Greenfield a couple times a month and might bring his bike to ride to Northampton. He says that is not a trip he makes currently, and so not algorithmically trackable, but he bets plenty of other people living in North Adams would take advantage of it.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Ben for the comment.

Marcel LaFlamme says he currently lives in Worcester and grew up in rural western Massachusetts. Marcel has returned to the state last summer after ten years in other parts of the country because of rail. He says it is the furthest point west that enables them to live and have a reliable rail connection to Boston for work and travel. He would like to buy a home in Franklin County and says Northern Tier rail service would be the game-changer that would make this possible. Marcel hopes the Study team will take situations like this into account when forecasting traffic.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Marcel for the comment.

Clare Deucher asks if there will be an opportunity to institute any kind of public transportation from Fitchburg south into Worcester or from Fitchburg south to Amtrak service in New York City.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says Amtrak currently operates service from Greenfield to Springfield and then down to New Haven, as well as the Connecticut service that runs from Springfield to New Haven with a high-speed rail connection there in New Haven for New York City. The other services between Fitchburg and Worcester or other locations are not necessarily the focus of the Study, but it is possible that the service plans and service alternatives that are developed might inspire other studies or initiatives to create the connection that could compliment a service that is being reviewed in this Study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Clare for the comment.

Ben Westbrook says the trains would be packed for bigger concert events at MASS MoCA.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Ben for the comment and says the Study team will be looking at big attractors across the Study corridor.

Carl McKinney asks if there is any way to help the Study team and suggests hosting community information sessions in the towns along the Northern Tier.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says one way to help would be through letting people know about this process. The Study team would like to reach out to as many people as possible and to receive input from the public. She says there will be a workshop later this year to further discuss the development of service alternatives and it would be helpful if this information was shared by people who are familiar with the Study.

J M says going to Boston late in the day sometimes eliminates getting the commuter rail to the South Shore and would like to get there early in the day to make tourism and visiting family easier.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says this comment speaks to Paul's portion of the presentation regarding trip making and is a big consideration of this process.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says these are the considerations that the Study team is looking at as the alternative service plans are put together. She says this includes the types of trips people want to make and what time of day is most suitable for making them the Study team is trying to put together schedules that accommodate a variety of needs including making connections to other locations whether it is in Maine or in the south shore of Massachusetts.

John Orrison (HNTB) says as the Study team develops intercity and passenger train schedules, and they will look at arrival times at North Station and then commutes between North and South Station to be

able to make some positive connections for travelling southward or vice versa. He says this comment will be considered as the schedules are developed.

Joe Kurland asks what can be done to create a cross platform connection at greenfield given that the current station platform is not between the tracks as the old station was.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is not quite there at this phase of Study but will look at the service alternatives which will include those connections. She explains that as the Study team goes into the next phase after that, they will look at what is required by way of infrastructure improvements to make those changes. She says that is a challenging location but as the Study team looks at how it could be made, the Study team has expert track station staff who can support.

Richard Duncan asks how many trips per day and per week are being considered.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is in the process of determining this now and no conclusions have been drawn at this point, however there will be up to six alternatives that will likely include a variety of numbers per day and days per week so that will be something that to discuss further in the fall when the alternatives are announced the workshop is held.

Mary-Ann Palmieri says she hopes cost will be considered since working people and the elderly will be using this corrido.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says that will be included in this process.

Mark Shapp asks if the trains are going to terminate and originate in North Adams, has any thought been given regarding a layover facility there so trains can overnight and be serviced to kick off the next morning's service to get to Boston at a reasonable hour. Additionally, he asks if the Study team has considered how the cars will be cleaned and about having to overnight trains in North Adams and talked to anyone from there about where a layover facility could be built. He points out that the Berkshire Flyer was conceived by people who did not seem to mind that Berkshire residents could not use the service. This service is only configured for people in the New York metropolitan region to go up to Pittsburgh and the Berkshires and come back on Sunday afternoon. He says as a practical matter, the people who live in Berkshire have been excluded and sees things in the way of getting that service expanded so it can a "two-way street".

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says this is an excellent point and everyone on the Study team go back many years in the railroad business and this is exactly what we will be considering as the services are put together. She explains there are many ways to do services of these types and the most efficient way would be to have a layover at the end of the line and depending on availability, there must be a place to park the trains and they would need to be serviced overnight with fuel and sand in the locomotives. She also says the trains would need to be cleaned, including the toilets, with portable trucks, food would need to be supplied if they have a food service onboard. These are all questions that will be considered as the Study team evaluates the alternatives. She also says the Study team will think of the most cost-effective way to supply all the needs that the trains and customers will have for the kind of alternatives that are being put together.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Mark and Anna for the questions and responses.

Jerry Lund asks if the Study team could send out more notices with links to the upcoming meetings and evolving.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says she is excited to let everyone that a monthly Study update e-newsletters are being sent out and encourages everyone to visit the Study website and to sign up for Study updates to receive information on the Study or to receive those e-newsletters and meeting information. This is also posted on the Study website, social media, and via email whenever there are formal meetings and workshops. She thanks Jerry for this question.

Ben Heckscher says that in the 1950s, the Boston & Maine Railroad provided passenger service between Boston North Station and Greenfield that took two hours and fifteen minutes. He asks if it is reasonable to expect that the service offering proposed in the Study will at least be able to meet this schedule.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team has been looking at the historical timetables as they have been developed. She says that while she is not familiar with that trip time, the Study team will be looking at the historic speeds and train services and what kind of trip times they had as the trip times for this Study get developed for some of the early alternatives. One of the Study team's goals is to make them competitive with the historic record to whatever degree is reasonable now.

John Orrison (HNTB) thinks this was a great question about the transit time between points, especially in Greenfield and in North Station. The Study team has been looking though the whole series of schedules including 1946 and 1950's schedules. He says by getting that data, the Study team would like to compare it with what could be created with this train service in the future. John says that the good news is the MBTA has spent a lot of money on upgrading the Fitchburg lines back around 2008 through 2012 and that was double tracking and increasing speeds from 60 miles an hour to 79 miles an hour. He explains they have actually reduced the transit times between North Station and Fitchburg than what you could achieve back in the 1950's. The second part of this is that in 2022 passenger equipment is much more advanced than what was available in the 1950's. He says the 1950's equipment is called heritage equipment and it could only go so much faster, a little bit faster than freight trains around curves but today's MBTA and Amtrak equipment can actually achieve higher speeds around the existing curves that are there. John says he is not ready to give a report on it, but the Study team is taking those facts into consideration in terms of what was historical transit times and what are achievable for today.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks everyone for the questions and responses.

Constance DiMarino thanks everyone who has supported and promoted expanding rail in Western, MA. She says she lives in Greenfield and experiences the benefits of the local train.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Constance for the comment.

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

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks members of the public for attending and sharing their comments and questions. She encourages attendees to visit the Study website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for Study updates and monthly e-newsletter. The materials from this meeting, including the StoryMap presentation, video recording, and meeting summary, will be made available on the Study website.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- John Orrison – HNTB
- Lauren Dvonch – HNTB
- Sara Stoja - HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Jo Comerford – State Senator
2. John Barrett – State Representative
3. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
4. Natalie Blais – State Representative
5. Peter Lowitt – Devens Enterprise Commission

Public Attendees:

1. Alan Butler
2. Alec Wade
3. Andrew Randazzo
4. Andrew Smith
5. Andy Hodgeland
6. Anne Gobi, State Senator
7. Bekkzoe Eowind
8. Ben Heckscher
9. Ben Westbrook
10. Brad Harris
11. Brittany Polito
12. Bryan Smith
13. Carl McKinney
14. Charlotte Minsky
15. Christine Sullivan
16. Clare Deucher
17. Clete Kus
18. Constance DiMarino
19. Dale LaBonte
20. Dana Roscoe
21. Daniel Cantwell
22. David Knavel
23. Deborah Benoit
24. Douglas Stotz
25. Eric Smith
26. Gabrielle Taylor
27. George Snow
28. Greg Vine
29. Hendrix Berry
30. Holly Rueger
31. Huff Templeton
32. J M
33. Jeffrey Lin
34. Jerry Lund
35. Joe Kurland
36. Johan Sednek
37. John Kapitzky
38. Kara Walsh
39. Karen Benko
40. Katie Stetner
41. Keith McGuirk
42. Kelan O'Brien
43. Kurt Schellenberg
44. Laura Hanson
45. Lora Wade
46. Marcel LaFlamme
47. Marcia Berkall
48. Margaret Scarsdale
49. Mariah Kurtz
50. Mark Shapp
51. Mary Byrne
52. Mary-Ann Palmieri

53. Max Pavlov
54. Michele Spring-More
55. Patricia Duffy
56. Paula O'Halloran
57. Peter Gagliardi
58. Richard Duncan
59. Robert J. La Trémouille
60. Roy Kimmel
61. Sarah Markham
62. Sharon Moulton
63. Shaw Izikson
64. Stephen Malagodi
65. Tom Hankinson
66. Travis Condon
67. Walker Powell
68. Werner Gertje