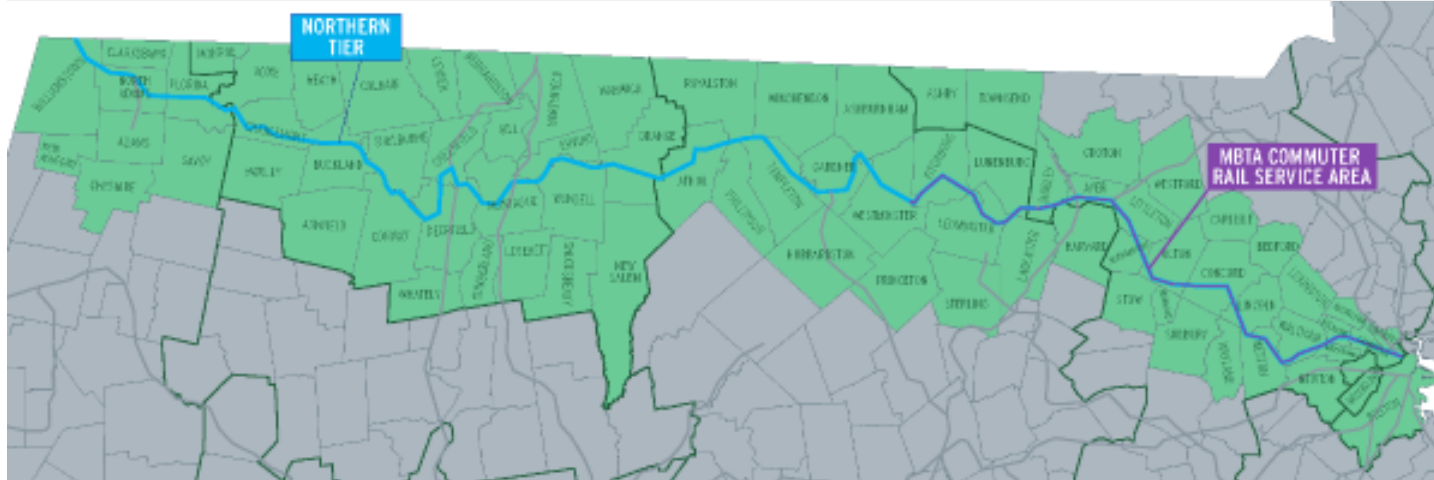




Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Please scroll down to move through this on-demand virtual meeting.

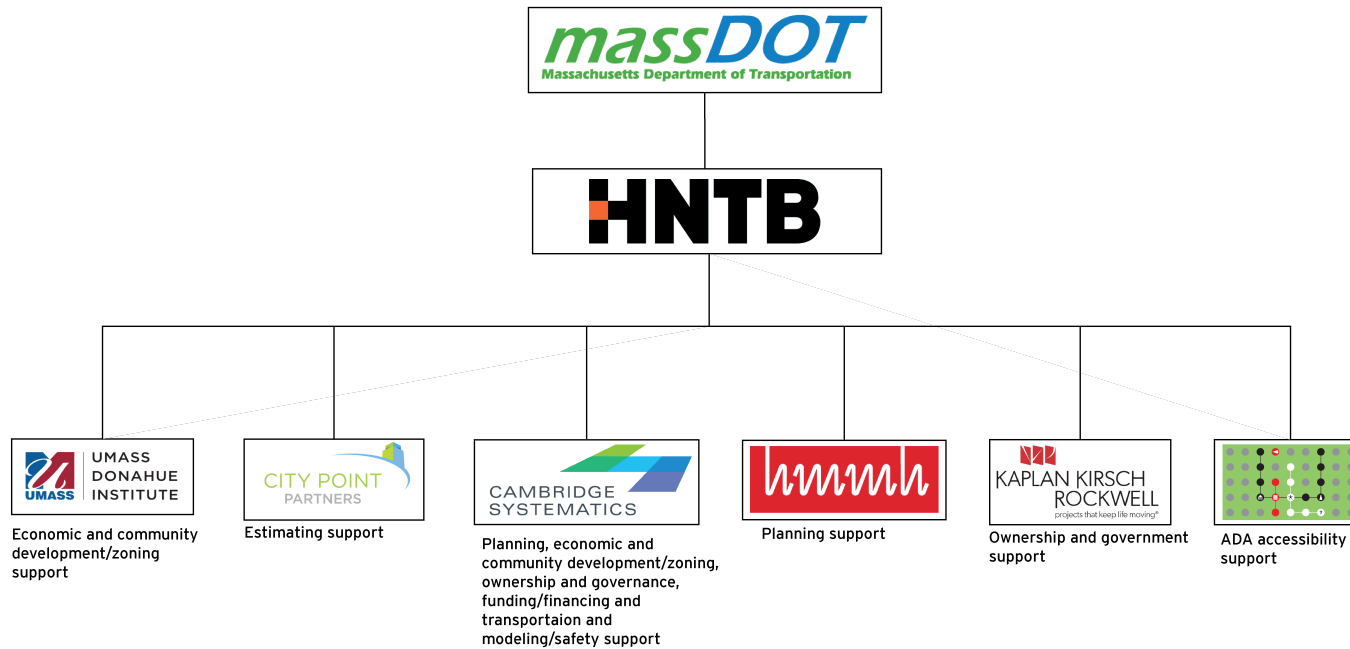
This meeting was presented to the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group and the public on December 16, 2021.

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Study and Working Group Overview
3. Study Background and Overview
4. Preview of Study Context
5. Goals Exercise and Discussion
6. Next Steps
7. Public Comment



Introductions



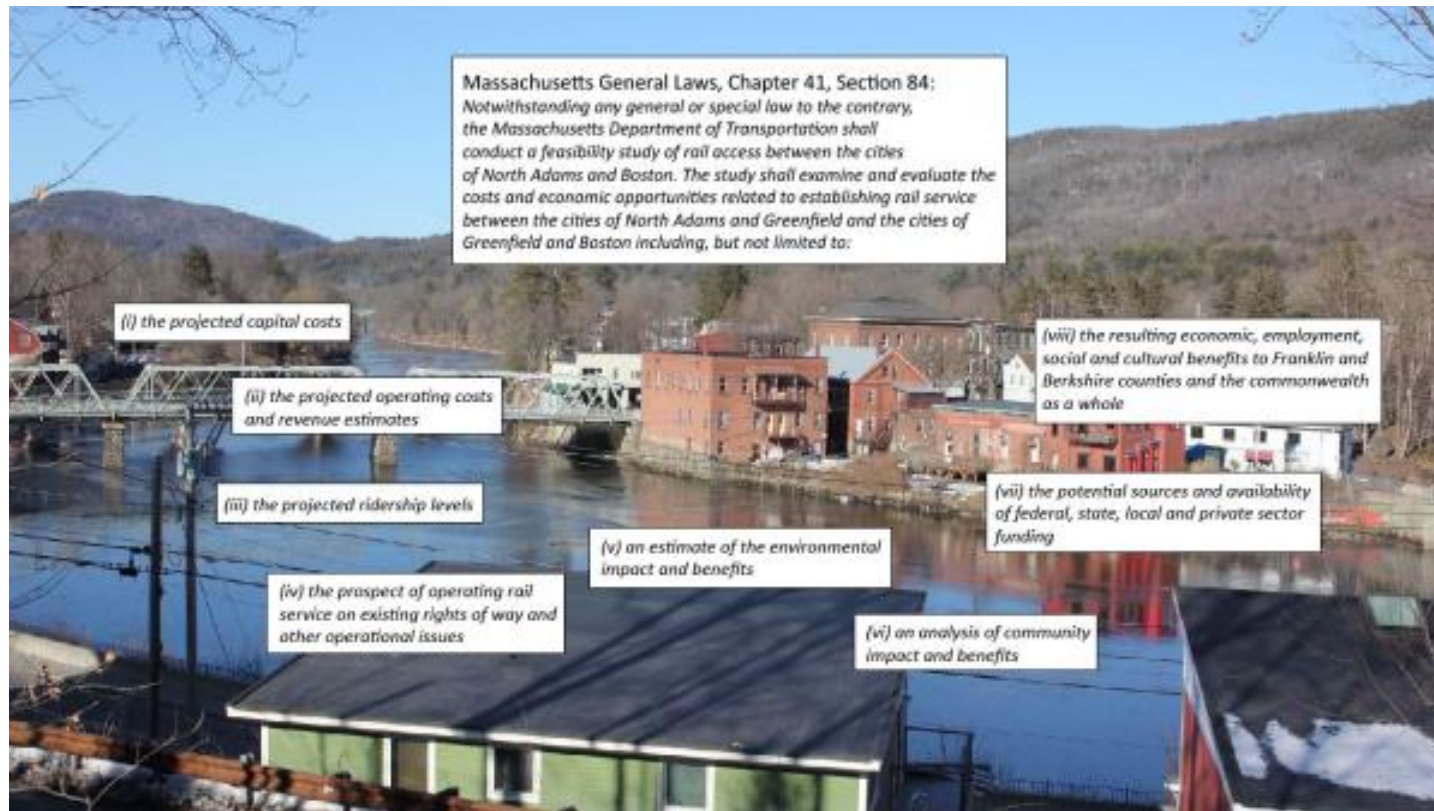
Icebreaker questions:

- What is your name?
- What is the organization/institution you are representing?
- What is the one most important outcome you would hope to achieve from a Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service?

Study and Working Group Overview

Working Group Role:

- Provide knowledge, expertise and perspective.
- Attend the meetings and actively participate and engage, while being respectful of others' time and points of view.
- Review information and provide feedback.
- Serve as conduit for broader public involvement.
- Share information with the organization/institution you represent.



Study Background and Overview

MassDOT is conducting a conceptual planning study to examine the statewide and regional economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges, and identify all necessary improvements to support passenger rail service between Boston and Northwestern Massachusetts. This new passenger rail service would provide:

1) An alternative means of transportation for people living in the western and central counties along this corridor to more easily travel to the Greater Boston Metro Region.

2) A means for people living in the Boston area to more easily travel to the northern areas of Berkshire, Franklin and Worcester Counties.



Study Process

Public Meeting Schedule



Public meetings will take place at key study milestones to solicit feedback from the public. Please note that public outreach will be a continuous process, therefore, there will be additional opportunities for engagement throughout the entirety of Study.



Alternatives Development and Analysis Process

The alternatives development process will take a two phase approach. In phase 1, the team will develop two alternatives:

1. Minimum build - The level of passenger service possible under the existing rail conditions.
2. Maximum build - The best level of passenger rail service through major investments in the rail infrastructure.

A public workshop will be held in Fall 2022 to review the two initial service plan alternatives and evaluation framework.

Feedback will be used to develop the final four service plan alternatives.



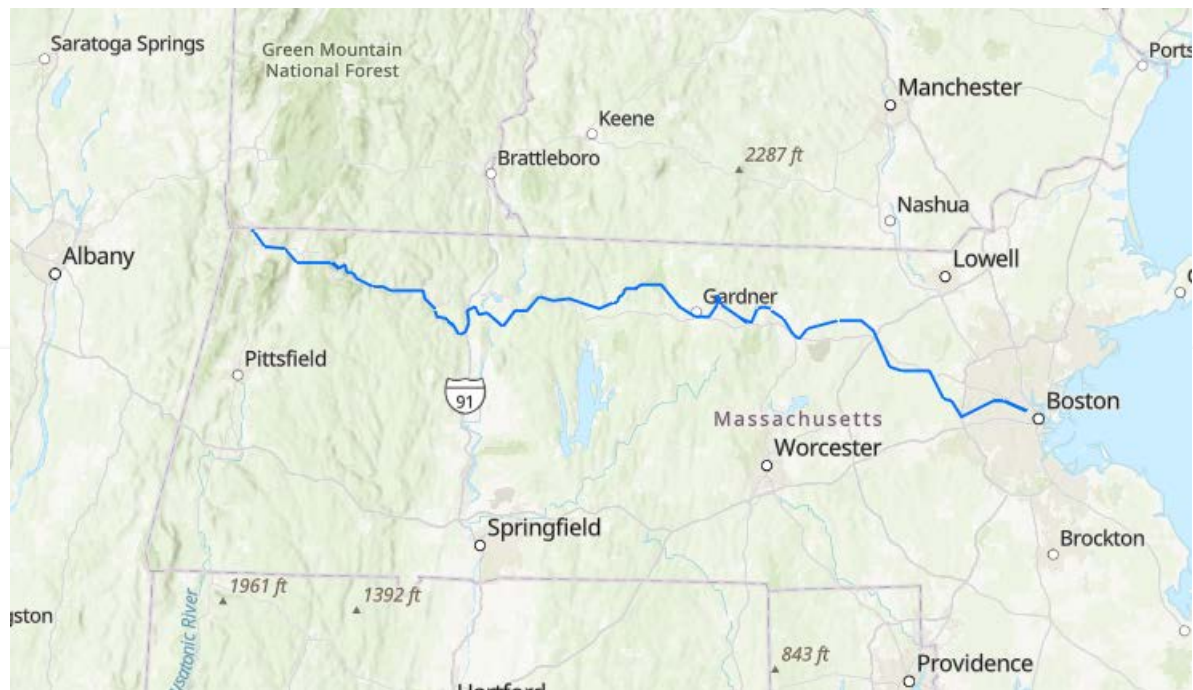
Additional Engagement Opportunities

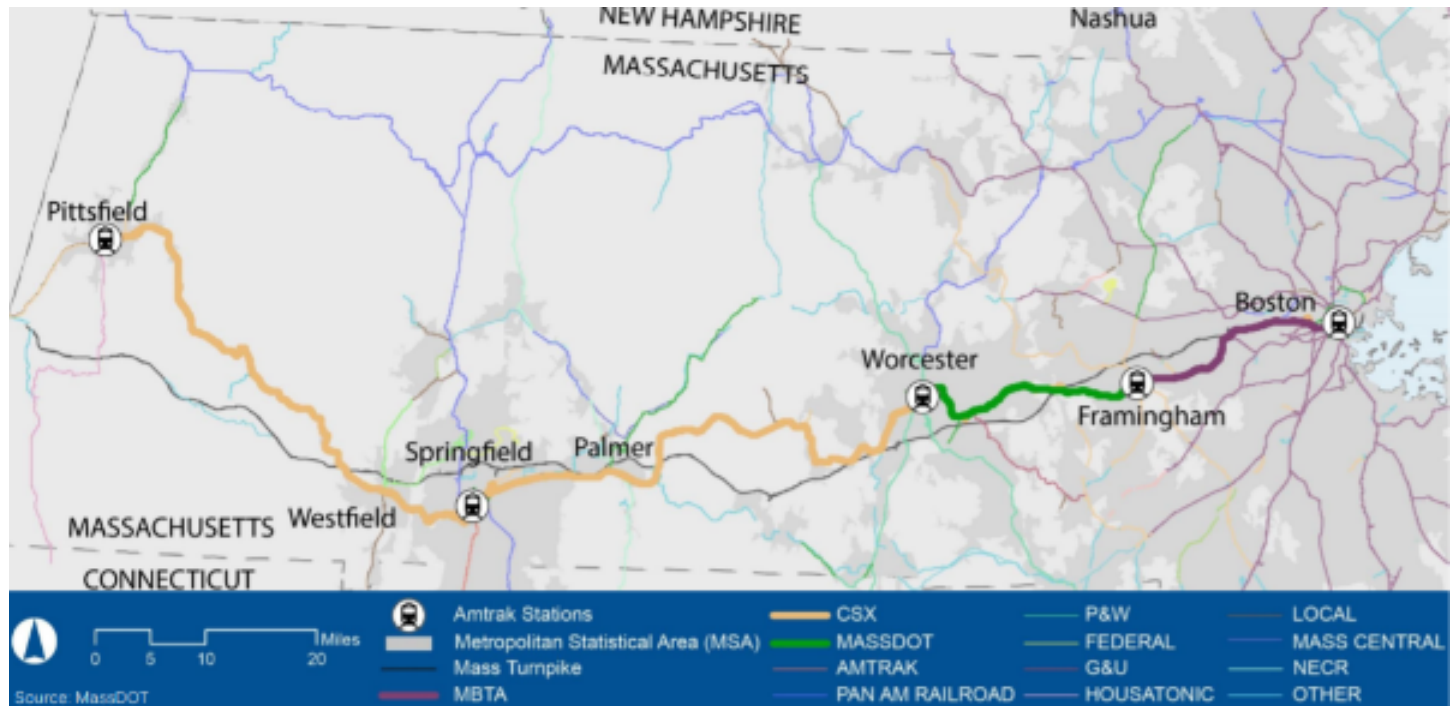
- Working Group members serve as community resources
- Public workshops
- Interactive websites
- Comment and subscription form

Preview of Study Context

Study Corridor Map

The map below shows the study corridor.





Similarities to the East-West Study

The East-West Passenger Rail Study evaluated potential improvement alternatives for providing new passenger rail connections between Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester, Boston, and intermediate communities. Similarly, the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study will explore options for providing greater connectivity across the Commonwealth, enhancing mobility, and creating new economic development opportunities. Passenger rail transportation is an important component of a multi-modal transportation system that can increase travel options and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Lessons Learned

The East-West Rail Study demonstrated both the importance of potential passenger service to Western MA communities and that significant investments may be required to realize the benefits of new rail service.



Sale of Pan Am Railway

CSX has proposed to acquire Pan Am Railways (PAR), a nearly 1,200 network across New York, Massachusetts and Northern New England. This acquisition includes the PAR share of the Pan Am Southern (PAS) joint venture. PAS owns the Northern Tier rail corridor (starting in Upstate New York) from the New York State line through North Adams to Fitchburg, MA.

If the sale is completed, local and through freight operations and railroad operators in the study corridor are likely to change during the study period.

The map above shows the Pan Am Railway network in the Northeast in grey. The Northern Tier study corridor is shown in blue.

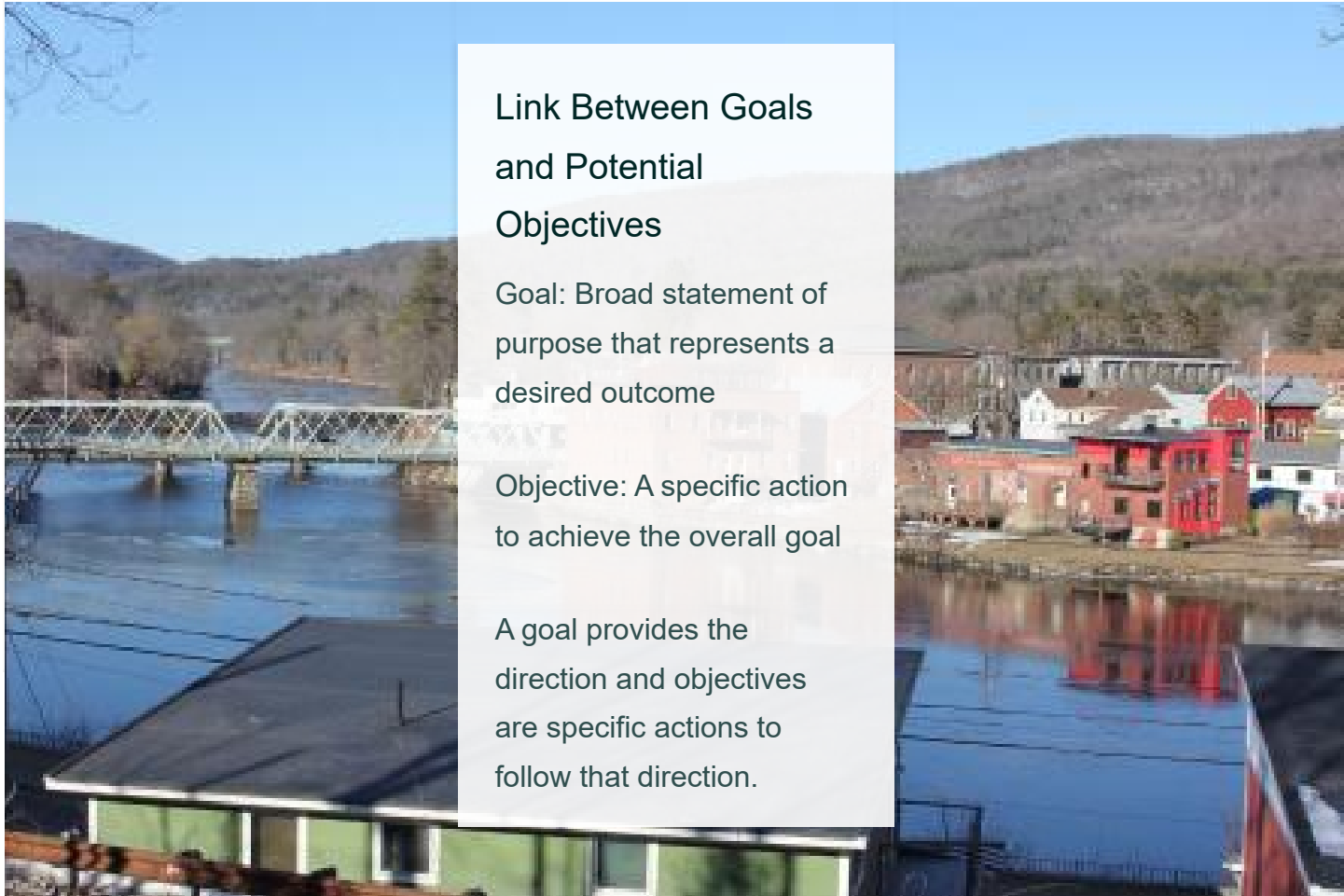
Goals Exercise and Discussion

Link Between Goals and Potential Objectives

Goal: Broad statement of purpose that represents a desired outcome

Objective: A specific action to achieve the overall goal

A goal provides the direction and objectives are specific actions to follow that direction.



Example Goal #1

Improve attractiveness of the Northern Tier as an affordable place to live.

Potential Objectives:

Locate new stations in communities with existing supply of available housing.

Provide passenger rail service during hours of the day convenient for work schedules at existing employment centers.

Provide passenger rail travel times competitive with existing peak hour during travel times.

Question: How would this compare to potential objectives for attracting new jobs and employers?

Example Goal #2

Improve mobility for transit-dependent populations.

Possible Objectives:

Locate new stations where transfers are possible to existing RTA bus routes.

Identify strategies for improving access and connectivity to station locations.

Provide passenger rail service throughout the day and on weekend to accommodate non-work-related trips.

Question: How can we balance access for transit-dependent populations and access for rail freight customers?

Potential Goals

- Improve attractiveness of the Northern Tier as an affordable place to live
- Enhance competitiveness for attracting new jobs and employers
- Support economic development for Northern Tier businesses
- Improve mobility for transit-dependent populations
- Reduce the number of automobile trips along the corridor
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air quality impacts from transportation

Prioritize Goals: Activity

Polling Questions:

Please click the button below to fill out a survey about study goals.

Polling Questions

Goals: Next Steps

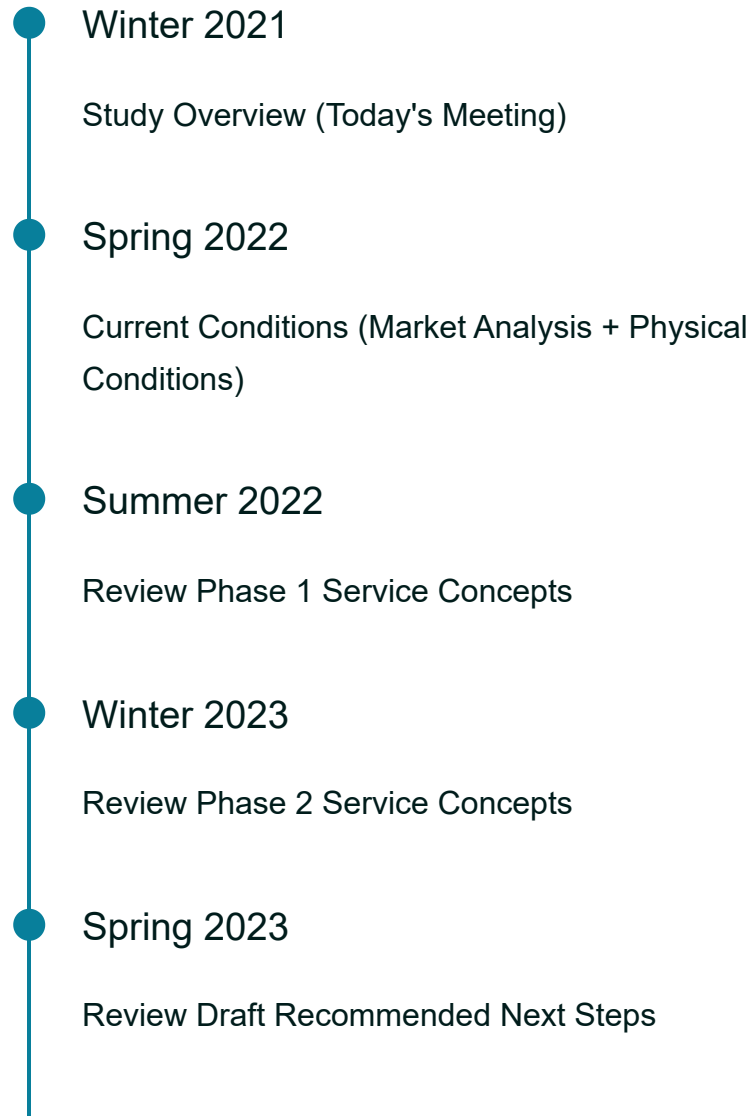
Study team will develop objectives for each goal. Working Group will have the opportunity to review and comment.

Next Steps

Overview of Study Team Work Tasks

1. **Public Involvement:** Fall 2021 - Spring 2023
2. **Documenting Past Efforts:** Fall 2021 - Winter 2022
3. **Current Conditions - Market Analysis:** Winter 2022 - Spring 2022
4. **Current Conditions - Physical, Regulatory and ROW Ownership:** Winter 2022 - Spring 2022
5. **Development of Potential Service Plans and Alternatives:** Spring 2022 - Winter 2023
6. **Alternatives Evaluation and Cost Estimates:** Summer 2022 - Winter 2023
7. **Development of Recommended Next Steps:** Winter 2023 - Spring 2023

Overview of Working Group Meeting Topics/Schedule



Public Comment

We want to hear from you!

Use the "**Study Website**" button to access the study website.

Study Website

Use the "**Comment Form**" button submit comments and questions to the study team.

Comment Form