



EAST-WEST PASSENGER RAIL STUDY

Public Meeting #2 – Summary
Wednesday, February 12, 2020

UMass Center at Springfield
1500 Main Street, Springfield, MA

Advisory Committee (AC) Attendees & Alternates

Clete Kus, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire
Linda Leduc, Town of Palmer
Maureen Mullaney, Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Elizabeth Quigley, Office of Congressman Richard Neal
Dana Roscoe, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority

Additional Elected Officials

Mayor Tom Bernard, City of North Adams
Councilor Jesse Lederman, City of Springfield
Lucas McDiarmid, Office of State Senator Anne Gobi
Selectwoman Tracy Opalinski, Town of Ware
Councilor Jessica Sizer, Town of Palmer

MassDOT Attendees

Astrid Glynn, Rail and Transit Administrator
Ethan Britland, Office of Transportation Planning
Makaela Niles, Office of Transportation Planning
Patrick Nestor, Legislative Affairs
Judi Riley, MassDOT Communications

Project Team Attendees

Drew Galloway, WSP – Consultant Team Project Manager
Ned Codd, WSP
Joel Anders, WSP
Laura McWethy, AECOM
Emily Christin, Regina Villa Associates

Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates

Public Attendees from sign-in sheets (see pages 18-19)

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to present the study's analysis of six preliminary alternatives and to gather feedback from attendees about the alternatives and what they would like to see in the three final alternatives that will be analyzed further.

Materials (Available on project website)

- PowerPoint presentation
- Fact sheet
- Alternatives handout - *see slides 29-46 of presentation*

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Ethan Britland, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, welcomed the public to the meeting and thanked them for coming. Mr. Britland introduced the project team and Katy, the interpreter. Katy informed attendees in Spanish that she is available to interpret the meeting if needed.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION¹

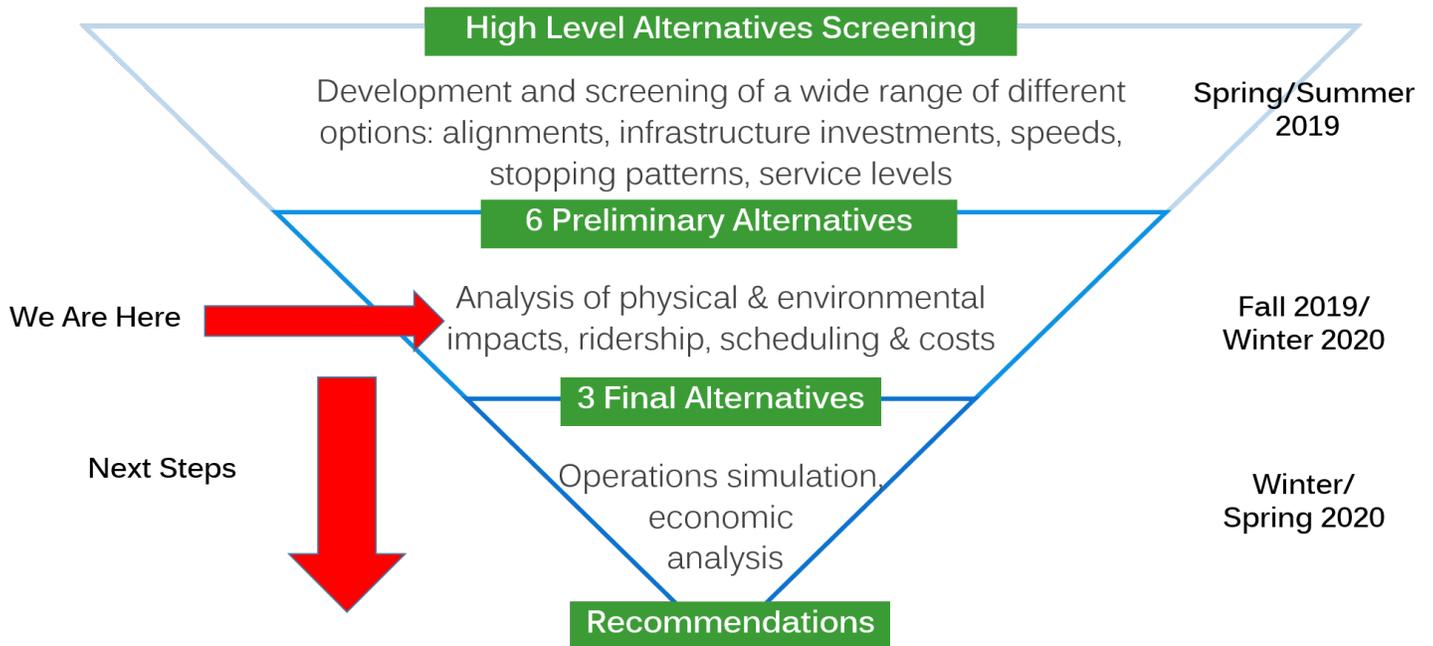
Mr. Britland reviewed the meeting agenda and meeting objectives, and he noted there is a comment sheet available for attendees to fill out during or after the presentation. He reviewed an updated study process schedule and said MassDOT intends to narrow the six preliminary alternatives to three alternatives and anticipates releasing the Final Report in Spring 2020.

Mr. Britland reviewed the study goals, study corridor, and corridor demographics. He reviewed the physical constraints along the corridor, which include curves, CSX freight service, vertical grades, and grade crossings in downtown Framingham.

Mr. Britland summarized previous and completed projects that have informed the study analysis, including the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) and Hartford Line. He listed pending projects that are not yet funded, but would affect East-West Rail service, including South Station Expansion, which are assumed to be in place for the purpose of the analysis.

Mr. Britland described the alternatives development and analysis process:

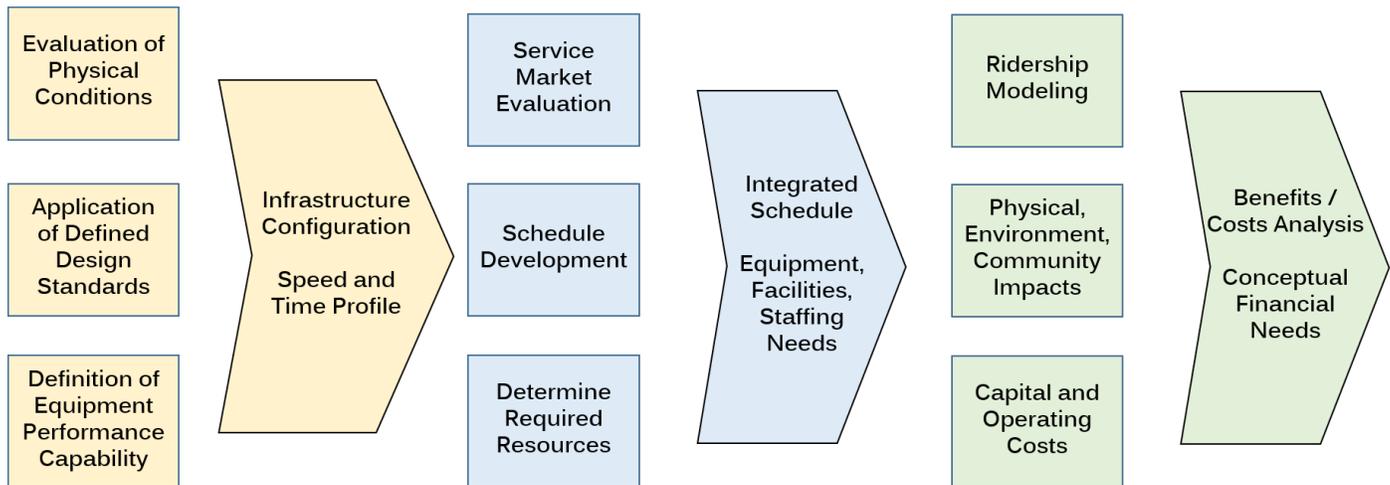
¹ The presentation from the meeting is available on the project website, www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study.



Mr. Britland introduced Drew Galloway, WSP. Mr. Galloway reviewed the key characteristics that were looked at for each alternative during the screening process:

- Corridor type
 - Shared corridor – service on upgraded, double-tracked CSX rail line
 - Shared corridor – service on new rail infrastructure in CSX corridor
 - Separate corridor – Massachusetts Turnpike/Interstate 90
- Travel time
 - Travel speed
 - Corridor type (shared v. separate, above)
 - Curvature and grade
 - Track infrastructure
 - Conflicts with other rail traffic – MBTA commuter rail, CSX freight, Amtrak
 - Stopping patterns
 - Direct service v. transfers
 - Express/limited stop v. more local stops
- Frequency
- Anticipated impacts

Mr. Galloway described the alternatives development process, summarized in the flow chart below:



Mr. Galloway noted the project team is looking for feedback and guidance from the Committee on how to complete the Benefits/Costs Analysis process.

Mr. Galloway showed a summary of the public feedback received to date, which has informed the process along the way. He also reviewed the alternatives screening process, in which the project team initially evaluated many more alternatives to narrow them to six.

He described the final six alternatives that were analyzed in order from lowest cost to highest cost, and divided by corridor type:

Service on shared, upgraded CSX rail line:

- **Alternative 1 – Springfield – Worcester (transfer to MBTA)**
 - Rail service between Springfield and Worcester, with trips to/from Boston requiring a transfer to MBTA
 - Bus connection between Pittsfield and Springfield
- **Alternative 2 – Springfield – Boston (bus to Pittsfield)**
 - Rail service between Springfield and Boston
 - Creates equipment challenge due to long trains, similar to those used by the MBTA
 - Bus connection between Pittsfield and Springfield
- **Alternative 3 – Pittsfield – Boston**
 - New equipment entirely
 - Draws from NNEIRI study
 - Passenger rail service that offers a one-seat ride between Pittsfield and Boston

Service on new rail line in CSX corridor:

- **Alternative 4 – Pittsfield – Boston**

- Entirely new track between Worcester and Springfield, shared track to Pittsfield due to topography
- **Alternative 5 – Springfield – Boston (bus to Pittsfield)**
 - Separate track between Springfield and Boston
 - Attempt to see what the shortest travel time could be
 - Bus connection between Pittsfield and Springfield

Service on new rail line in new corridor (Mass Turnpike corridor):

- **Alternative 6 – Pittsfield – Boston**
 - High-speed rail (electrified train service) in I-90 corridor to provide new passenger service between Pittsfield and Boston.

Mr. Galloway noted that speed, frequency, ridership and capital cost generally increase from alternative 1 to alternative 6. He also noted that because of the long length of the corridor (Springfield to New Jersey is roughly same distance as Boston to Pittsfield), alternative 5 offers a shorter train corridor to evaluate the potential for better equipment utilization.

Mr. Galloway reviewed the evaluation criteria that were used in the alternatives analysis, including ridership, physical impacts, environmental and community impacts, and costs and benefits.

Ridership Forecasting Methodology

Mr. Galloway presented how the ridership numbers were developed for each alternative. He described the Incremental Ridership Model, which starts with existing rail ridership and then factors in current and future demographics, and the proposed rail service. He noted it is the same model that was used for the NNEIRI.

He explained how proxy stations are used in certain instances along the corridor that do not have a base ridership available to use, for example, if a new station is going to be added or dramatically different service will be provided. Proxy stations are chosen (in order of importance) by service characteristics, distance between stations, and demographics around the station. He noted the proxy stations had to be selected from within the study corridor for the model to work properly, so the choices will be a similar pair but may not be a perfect match. The project team looked at the Hartford Line for examples of proxy stations in the study area, as those riders could be similar to match a more commuter-focused market. He explained that the model does not include fare as an input (it is assumed by the base ridership numbers), nor does it outline specific trip purpose.

The outputs of the model include annual bi-directional rail ridership by station pair. Since the model is incremental, it does not assume dramatic changes in service that would lead to land use shifts or demographic growth. Mr. Galloway noted that it is reasonable to assume that the alternatives with higher levels of service could see some level of induced demand beyond that which is forecast by the ridership model. He explained how induced demand could be caused by

a project that improves the transportation network as a whole (i.e. fewer cars on highways). The East-West corridor would connect rural markets to eastern Massachusetts, which could potentially see a 1-5% increase in trips over the forecast ridership. In contrast, high-speed rail projects in urban areas in Europe have seen up to 20-30% in induced demand. Mr. Galloway shared examples of actual induced demand numbers in Europe, as well as NEC FUTURE forecasts based on the 2013 survey.

Mr. Galloway said the model does not define trip purpose, but the project team developed profiles of who might ride the East-West Rail based on the 2013 NEC FUTURE traveler survey and demographics:

- Regular commuters – approximately 10%
- Business travelers – approximately 26%
- Personal travelers – approximately 64%

Alternatives Analysis

Mr. Galloway introduced Ned Codd, WSP. Mr. Codd presented the results of each alternative, in order from lowest to highest cost, divided into the three corridor types.² He noted that the results are more meaningful when compared together. He presented the following summary tables of the analysis, which include estimates for frequency, 2040 ridership, travel time, environmental impacts, community impacts, and cost:

² Detailed maps and tables of the results of each alternative can be seen in the presentation on slides 29-46.

Summary of Preliminary Alternatives

Projected Ridership – 2040 Annual One-Way Boardings

Corridor Type	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – New Separate Track	Shared – New Separate Track	Separate Corridor – I-90
Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
<i>Weekday Round-Trips</i>	4	6	7	9	9	17
BOS + BBY + LAN	1,200	13,200	20,300	35,650	37,000	77,850
FRA (Lake Shore Limited)	100	750	700	700	650	950
WOR (Direct Access)	1,900	9,700	13,000	22,650	23,950	49,850
WOR (MBTA Transfers)	1,950	2,850	5,150	5,800	6,700	12,650
PLM	450	2,950	3,900	6,700	-	11,150
SPG (Direct Access)	2,300	11,650	16,750	28,750	29,300	53,650
SPG (HL Transfers)	650	3,950	5,100	5,300	6,500	9,950
BLD	400	400	-	-	1,850	4,950
CHS	-	-	950	1,600	-	-
LEE	200	400	-	-	1,950	5,200
PIT	2,000	2,150	6,400	9,950	7,150	21,500
TOTAL	11,150	48,000	72,250	117,100	115,050	247,700

Summary of Preliminary Alternatives (cont'd.)

Projected Ridership – Daily One-Way Boardings

Corridor Type	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – New Separate Track	Shared – New Separate Track	Separate Corridor – I-90
Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
<i>Weekday Round-Trips</i>	4	6	7	9	9	17
BOS + BBY + LAN	4	44	67	118	123	258
FRA (Lake Shore Limited)	0	2	2	2	2	3
WOR (Direct Access)	6	32	43	75	79	165
WOR (MBTA Transfers)	6	9	17	19	22	42
PLM	1	10	13	22	-	37
SPG (Direct Access)	8	39	55	95	97	178
SPG (HL Transfers)	2	13	17	18	22	33
BLD	1	1	-	-	6	16
CHS	-	-	3	5	-	-
LEE	1	1	-	-	6	17
PIT	7	7	21	33	24	71
TOTAL	36	158	238	387	381	820

Summary of Preliminary Alternatives (cont'd.)

Travel Time to South Station (Up to 5 minutes faster / 10 minutes slower depending on schedule)

Corridor Type	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – New Separate Track	Shared – New Separate Track	Separate Corridor – I-90
Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
WOR	1:21	1:03	0:56	0:53	0:48	0:44
SPG	2:46	2:14	1:55	1:47	1:34	1:19
PIT	4:02	3:39	3:08	2:59	3:00	2:18

Summary of Preliminary Alternatives (cont'd.)

Environmental Impacts (Square Feet of Impact)

Corridor Type	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – New Separate Track	Shared – New Separate Track	Separate Corridor – I-90
Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
Wetlands + Open Water	49,921	49,921	60,136	549,294	729,354	2,725,652
Article 97 Lands	2,514	2,514	136,511	554,765	510,854	2,715,672
Area of Critical Env. Concern	0	0	0	0	0	4,648,979

Community Impacts

Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
Buildings – Residential	0	0	0	27	39	58
Buildings – Commercial	0	0	0	52	51	123
Buildings – Other	0	0	0	12	13	25
Buildings – TOTAL	0	0	0	91	103	206
Non-Rail/ROW Land (SF)	337,233	337,233	717,303	3,718,432	4,235,386	9,393,342
Existing At-Grade Xings	17	17	38	38	17	6
Improved At-Grade Xings/ New Grade-Separations	0	0	30	30	11	130

Preliminary Alternatives – Cost per Rider

2020 Dollars & 2040 Ridership

Corridor Type	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – Existing Alignment	Shared – New Separate Track	Shared – New Separate Track	Separate Corridor – I-90
Alternative	1 – WOR-SPG, Upgraded	2 – BOS-SPG, Upgraded	3 – BOS-PIT, Upgraded + Realignment	4 – BOS-PIT, New Track	5 – BOS-SPG, New Track + Realignment	6 – BOS-PIT, High Speed Rail
Capital Costs (\$M)	\$1,988.5	\$2,122.1	\$3,213.3	\$4,130.5	\$5,181.3	\$24,942.5
Annual O&M (\$M)	\$27.4	\$41.8	\$51.6	\$65.7	\$49.0	\$86.1
Construction Cost (\$M)	\$1,011.2	\$1,011.2	\$1,579.9	\$2,027.0	\$2,615.6	\$12,651.0
Annual Ridership	11,150	48,000	72,250	117,100	115,050	247,700
Construction Cost per Passenger Trip (\$)	\$90,689	\$21,067	\$21,868	\$17,311	\$22,735	\$51,074
10% Induced Demand Riders	1,115	4,800	7,225	11,710	11,505	24,770
Annual Ridership (10% Induced Demand)	12,265	52,800	79,475	128,810	126,555	272,470
Construction Cost per Passenger Trip + 10% (\$)	\$84,918	\$19,726	\$20,476	\$16,209	\$21,288	\$47,824
35% Induced Demand Riders	3,903	16,800	25,288	40,985	40,268	86,695
Annual Ridership (35% Induced Demand)	15,053	64,800	97,538	158,085	155,318	334,395
Construction Cost per Passenger Trip + 35% (\$)	\$71,268	\$16,555	\$17,185	\$13,604	\$17,866	\$40,137

Mr. Codd explained the construction costs per rider only include the cost of construction, and are not the full capital costs (vehicles, real estate purchases, etc.). He pointed out the last section of the summary table includes the potential impact of a range of induced demand to costs per rider, and the costs per new rider decrease significantly for the 35% range.

Mr. Codd summarized two studies and four projects that the study team has looked to for comparison:

- Studies:
 - NNEIRI
 - California High-Speed Rail
- Completed Projects:
 - Downeaster
 - Southeast High-Speed Rail
 - Chicago-St. Louis
 - Cascades

He explained how High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants enhanced each project and facilitated increases in ridership. He showed a table comparing each of the Completed Projects. He noted that while they have a lower capital cost per new rider, each of those corridors already had existing, significant rail ridership (East-West Rail will create new passenger rail service, resulting in a higher cost).

Mr. Codd summarized the South Coast Rail Phase 1 Project, which will provide commuter rail service from Boston to Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River via the Middleborough/Lakeville Line. South Coast Rail Phase 1 has a lower cost per rider; however, commuter rail requires different operations than intercity passenger rail.

Next Steps

Mr. Britland presented the next steps for the study, which include an Advisory Committee meeting on February 24, 2020. Mr. Britland reviewed the list of key criteria to be used for narrowing the six alternatives down to three, and showed a table of the study schedule. He also noted that MassDOT will be conducting a sensitivity analysis.

He asked the public to share comments and questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Quigley, Office of Congressman Richard Neal, read a statement from Congressman Neal. He thanked MassDOT and Governor Baker for carrying out the study, noting there is now comprehensive data on all six alternatives. He looks forward to reading the Report, which will provide an in-depth roadmap on how the study can become a reality. He said infrastructure is a top priority and the investment should be transformative.

Mayor Tom Bernard, North Adams, thanked the Advisory Committee and the MassDOT team. He asked attendees from the Berkshires to stand up. He said any alternative that requires a bus from Pittsfield is a nonstarter, noting it is a matter of equity. Mayor Bernard said this will result in growth on both sides of the state, and western Massachusetts has footed the bill on too many Eastern MA infrastructure projects and it is time they are paid back as well. He supports Alternative 6, as it will run along public infrastructure (the Pike). He said this is a generational investment in the region that will support economic development, the future, the environment, and growth in western Massachusetts.

Rob Kusner said he teaches at UMass Amherst. He asked how many people in the room are from UMass and how many people are from Palmer. He said many students and staff at UMass travel frequently between Boston and Amherst, which would provide a lot of ridership. He urged MassDOT to include a stop in Palmer.

John Garrett asked to see the slide in the presentation for Alternative 2. He suggested the bus line concept is a joke; he does not trust the ridership figures; and the Administration is slow walking the project.

John Griffin, a resident of Greenfield, said he feels the ridership numbers presented are too low. He supports Alternative 6. He said that the Commonwealth has invested significantly more in other transit planning efforts.

An attendee asked why Option 1 hasn't connected to MBTA service and said there is a lack of interaction between town planning and smart growth. Alternative 1 should definitely connect to Springfield.

David Rees, MASS MoCA, said if a cost-benefit analysis of MASS MoCA was done twenty years ago it would never have been built. He said there is a thriving arts community in western Massachusetts, and any alternative with bus service is a nonstarter. He said rail and economic development are essential.

David, a student at UMass Amherst, said it is not acceptable to take Palmer out of Alternative 5 and it is not acceptable to not have rail service to the Berkshires. He said Massachusetts is a leader of the arts in across the nation and it should support extending service to the western part of the state.

Betsy Ford said she has lived in Springfield for 20 years. She said any alternatives with a bus should be thrown out. She is impressed with what was presented and the work she has been done on the study. She said it used to be possible to take a train from Springfield to the Berkshires and Albany, but then the automobile boom occurred. She said there was no mention of the income generated by selling train tickets that could offset the cost. She asked how long it will take before she sees any of these projects. Mr. Britland said the next steps for the study include developing a construction timeline estimate for the three final alternatives.

Richard Holzman said anything with buses is a nonstarter. He said the Mass Pike bypassed the Berkshires, Chester, and Hilltowns, which have never recovered. He urged MassDOT to look at Alternative #4 or a similar hybrid. He noted the unsustainable population growth in the eastern part of the state, the high cost of living, and traffic congestion. He said the place to develop is in the west.

Tracy Opalinski, Town of Ware, referred to the NNEIRI study and noted the large population of UMass which would utilize a station in Palmer. She said UMass students have difficulty reaching internships due to the lack of public transportation. UMass should have been included in the Advisory Committee as it has a large stake in the project, and businesses are choosing not to expand in the area due to the lack of transportation options. She said east-west rail would allow people to have better access to healthcare, education and jobs.

Mike, a resident of Palmer, said the Boston area would benefit just as much as western MA from east-west rail. He said the ridership would increase tremendously because people would migrate from eastern MA, which suffers from traffic congestion and air quality. He listed figures from a Boston Globe article about the increasing traffic congestion. There are more than 300,000 vehicles on the road than there were five years ago.

Emmaladd Shepherd, Citizens for Palmer Rail Stop, said the project team hasn't mentioned how Massachusetts winters would impact any alternative that provides buses.

An attendee asked Mr. Britland to clarify how the future ridership was modeled. Mr. Britland explained the forecasting is based on future (2040) demographics that come from the state's Metropolitan Planning Organization's long-range plans. The attendee noted the potential for induced demand is significant, especially given the high cost of driving and parking in Boston, and the cost of a train ticket would not deter riders.

Jonathan Fryer, a resident of eastern Massachusetts, said he commutes to Boston regularly by car. He said he sees the alternatives as a question of speed, and the commute time should be short to encourage riders. He said the travel time of alternative 6 is still not short enough, so he proposes an "alternative 7" which includes elements of alternatives 5 and 6 but places the rail in a tunnel beneath I-90. He noted this would eliminate land/wetland impacts, elevation changes, bridges, etc. He referenced projects in China and Italy that employed similar strategies.

A participant from Springfield asked for more details about the environmental/wetland impacts study. Mr. Britland explained WSP is conducting the analysis and producing maps with GIS data layers (including wetland, parkland, open space, etc.). The participant asked about eminent domain. Mr. Britland said the intention of the planning study is to identify impacts in order to potentially avoid them. Mr. Britland said he cannot speak to eminent domain at this point in the study, but right-of-way (ROW) and community impacts will be included in the Final Report.

Donald Blais, Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop, asked what the difference between alternatives 4 and 5 were. Mr. Britland explained alternative 5 has priority realignments in the area between

Springfield and Worcester to straighten the corridor for higher speeds. Mr. Blais commented that the ridership numbers presented seem too low, and the Palmer area is surrounded by UMass and UConn. He said Palmer is not growing economically. Mr. Britland confirmed that MassDOT is open to hybrids of the preliminary six alternatives as none of them are set in stone. Mr. Britland said the alternatives were developed so the study team could analyze a variety of travel options.

Jesse Lederman, Springfield City Council, said he hopes MassDOT heeds the comments it's hearing at the meeting. He said it is about time western Massachusetts saw spending in this part of the state and that these communities should be connected within this generation. It's time to connect the economy across the state.

Irene Pereira, a resident of Ludlow, said as a public school teacher she is mandated to have Professional Development (PD), and most of the PD opportunities are in the eastern part of the state. She explained how the travel time to Boston has gotten worse over the years, and her son had to live in Boston in order to take an internship opportunity to avoid the commute.

Jonathan Alves, a resident of Boston, said he traveled to the meeting to show his support for east-west rail. He said western Massachusetts has been left in the dust as the Boston area boomed. He challenged the Baker administration to be bold and to move forward with alternative 6.

Meredith Babcock, a resident of Beckett, thanked MassDOT for its hard work and attention on this study. She mentioned the value of existing tracks between Springfield and Pittsfield with a stop in Chester is less expensive, and the area has a rich history. She said other things are important besides speed, and alternative 4 would provide rail as well as expand the cultural and recreational economy.

Brett Provost, a resident of Boston, said there are thousands of young professionals in Boston who would prefer not to pay the high cost of rent in Boston. He is originally from Ludlow and he would like to move back and invest in his home community. He supports alternative 6.

Ben Lamb, North Adams, said any alternatives with a bus is a nonstarter. He said the Big Dig cost \$34 billion in today's dollars, so the prices of the six preliminary alternatives should not be scoffed at. He said western Massachusetts deserves equity and said there are many immigrant families who have no viable transportation and should not be ignored.

Ben Hood, Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop, referred to the results of the economic study conducted by UMass Amherst's Center for Economic Development which shows what can happen to communities like Palmer and Chester when rail infrastructure is put in place. He emphasized that everyone in the audience should work together and encouraged people to go to westernmassrail.org and palmertrain.org for more information.

Lucas McDiarmid, Office of Senator Anne Gobi, said Senator Gobi would like to thank the community stakeholders in attendance. Senator Gobi disagrees with the preliminary ridership numbers presented at the meeting and believes they should be much higher. She is committed to raising equity for all Massachusetts citizens.

Sarah Heller, a resident of Brookfield, said the climate crisis should be a key factor in choosing which alternative moves forward. She asked if alternative 6 is the only option with electrified trains. Mr. Britland said alternative 6 assumes electrification, however if any of the alternatives move forward, electrification could be incorporated.

Pat McKenna, a member of the City of Chicopee Planning Department, also referenced climate change and said side projects such as bike paths along the length of the state should be included in the alternatives.

Jeanne LeClair, Gateway Hilltowns, said many of the Hilltowns have done a lot of work already by request of the state, such as assembling coalitions of connecting towns. She said the towns have done all they can do but they face infrastructural barriers. She asked MassDOT to take previous work, momentum and investments in each town into consideration when it considers future projects.

Anne Miller, Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop, said there are different viewpoints being spoken at the meeting, some people want the train to be fast and others want it in their communities. She said one thing everyone agrees on is they do not want *nothing*. She said the ridership estimates are lower than they should be and she is worried the east-west study will be shelved like NNEIRI. She said there is already a lot of cynicism and asked MassDOT to consider the impact of doing nothing.

Blake Lamothe said he has owned Palmer Union Station for 30 years. He asked how long it would take for alternative 6 to become operational. Mr. Britland said estimated timelines will be determined for the three final alternatives. Mr. Lamothe said it is unfair to leave out the communities which have suffered without railroads for years, and he believes alternative 6 is not fair to the communities. He said there is a lot of space in Palmer to be used for a parking lot for a train station.

Rob Cassie, a Springfield-area resident, asked why the study is not called West-East. He supports alternative 1 being a short-term solution with alternative 6 being the long term solution. He asked why consultants hired by the administration have inflated the cost of the alternatives.

Jay Flynn, TransitMatters, said every politician in western Massachusetts wants regional rail. He said Worcester is booming now because of the rail connection, and it would be a game changer for Springfield if it could be connected to Boston in 90 minutes. He asked people to keep pushing their elected officials, and said there is a history with these studies, saying if the government doesn't want to do something they will attach big numbers to it. He said no one is looking at the fact that the east-west rail should connect to Hartford and Albany.

Mark, a resident of Springfield, said Eric Lesser mentioned this study during his campaign years ago. He asked Mr. Britland what if the study had already been done. Mr. Britland said he cannot speak to “what ifs”.

Josh Ostroff, T4MA, asked that attendees not talk down buses too much, as RTAs are frequently needed to get people to stations. He asked attendees to urge their legislators to invest funds in revenue just as much as they are urging MassDOT at this meeting. He noted the need for state legislators to seek revenue beyond what is in the Governor’s bond bill and encouraged people to talk with their legislators to find more funding. He said A Better City looked into what is needed to bring existing public transportation into a State of Good Repair and it would cost billions. Worcester had little service and now has about 10 times as much, so it is possible for east-west service to be incremental. He said it would be decades before alternative 6 could be implemented.

Jay, a resident of Springfield, said he is an engineer and appreciates the design review process. He asked if it is possible for the three final alternatives to be hybrids of the preliminary six alternatives. Mr. Britland said yes, the three final alternatives are not set and hybrids are definitely on the table. Jay said he wanted people in the room to be aware that for alternatives 4, 5, and 6, there will be private land impacts. Mr. Britland said as the final three alternatives are developed, MassDOT works to minimize impacts and noted the numbers in the presentation are conceptual impacts and are not definite takings. If any of the alternatives move forward, land impacts would be looked into more closely and they are one of the criteria when narrowing the alternatives.

A resident of Easthampton said she cannot imagine investing decades and billions of dollars into any alternative without making the environment a primary consideration over speed, time, and ridership.

Danielle St. Jean, a resident of Longmeadow, said she and her fiancé relocated from Boston several years ago due to the high cost of living. She said they were able to purchase a home, and any of the alternatives would create that opportunity for others like them.

Huff Templeton said alternative 6 might have a benefit of being closer to businesses along the I-90 corridor and could improve tourism for the Berkshires. He asked if an addition of 12 minutes of travel time is the same for alternative 6 as well given that is high-speed. Mr. Galloway said since alternative 6 is high-speed, it would incur the maximum travel time increase with each station it must stop at. He explained it takes a lot of time to slow down from 150 mph and then get back up to speed, but on a low-speed train, the impacts are almost negligible when stops are added.

Brad Howard said he moved out of Boston 11 years ago. He said Massachusetts was the first in a lot of things and it should be the first in rail too.

John Macauliffe asked why this type of rail service is called “intercity” – he said in Beacon, NY, he sees mostly commuters to NYC on the train. Mr. Galloway explained the ridership characteristics and distance between stations are the criteria for labeling the type of service. He said Beacon is about 60 miles from NYC, but Springfield is 98 miles from Boston and Pittsfield and 158 miles from Boston. Mr. Galloway explained this distance is what the federal government uses to classify it as “intercity” rail. John urged MassDOT to connect Springfield to Boston.

Jonathan Fryer explained how his proposed “alternative 7” has little to no land takings, vertical grades, or environmental effects. He also noted the construction would not be disruptive if it is underground.

Mr. Britland thanked the attendees for coming and closed the meeting.

Public Attendees:

Jonathan Alves
 Price Armstrong
 Meredith Babcock, *Wild & Scenic Westfield River*
 Heidi Bara, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
 Stuart Beckley, *Town of Ware*
 David Beers
 Dan Bergeron
 Pat Bergeron
 Donald Blais, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
 Gil Bolduc
 Jeff Bourque
 Paul Burns, *PVTA*
 Craig Carr
 Tom Casartello
 Catherine Cascio
 Robert Cassie
 Nicholas Catoggio, *Train Riders N.E.*
 Karen Christensen
 William Cichaski, *City of Chicopee*
 Michael Connors, *Daily Hampshire Gazette*
 Christopher Corr
 Jeff Cossin
 Juan Cress
 Sheila Cuddy, *Quaboag Valley CDC*
 Roz Curran
 David Cuthbertson, *HNTB*
 Bob Daley, *Team Chester*
 John DeVoie, *Hot Table*

Mark Doresey
 Tighe Dudeck
 Jeff Dykes, *REMI*
 Mike Eagen
 Regina Edmonds, *Grassroots Central Mass*
 David Fite, *UMass Amherst*
 Jay Flynn, *TransitMatters*
 Lucia Foley, *South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee*
 Roger Forturo
 J. Fryer
 David Fuller
 Sally Fuller
 David Gaby, *McKnight CDC*
 John Garrett
 Adam Garvey
 Steve Goodwin, *UMass Center*
 Jonathan Griffin
 Karen Hansmann
 Patience Hartley
 Ben Heckscher, *Trains in the Valley*
 Sarah Heller, *Grassroots Central MA*
 Alex Herchenreder
 Cynthia Hester
 Richard Holzman, *Team Chester*
 Ben Hood, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
 Brad Howard
 Leonie Howard
 Andrew Jennings
 Betsy Johnson, *Walk Bike Springfield*

James Johnson	Betsy Port
Karen Jones	Marjorie Pressolann
David Kates	Brett Provost
Charlie Knight, <i>SCARF</i>	Karen Robitaille
Ted Kozak	Cara Radzins, <i>CRCOG</i>
Rob Kusner, <i>UMass Amherst</i>	Eileen Rakouskas
Scarlet Lamothe, <i>Palmer Union Station</i>	David Rees, <i>MASS MoCA</i>
Blake Lamothe, <i>Palmer Union Station</i>	Kenny Richards
Juan F. Latorre	Emmanuel Russell
Charlotte Le	Nahrin Sangkagalo, <i>CMRPC</i>
Jim Le	Andrea Saucedo
Jeanne LeClair, <i>Gateway Hilltowns</i>	Emily Schiavoni
Jacob Linger, <i>REMI</i>	Emmaladd Shepherd, <i>Citizens for Palmer Rail Stop</i>
Marissa Mackson	Fred Smith, <i>Train Riders Northeast</i>
Bill Malloy	Shawn Smith, <i>Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop</i>
Susan Manoussoff	Eddie Sporn
Paul Marchese, <i>St. Germain Investment Mgmt</i>	Peter Spotts, <i>Country Journal</i>
Michael Marciniac, <i>Palmer Planning Board</i>	Luke Stankowski
Joseph Mastro	Jiu Stewart
Joel McAuliffe	Danielle St. Jean
John McElduff	Bill Sullivan, <i>Arcadis</i>
Nick McGee, <i>UMass Amherst</i>	Matt Szafranski, <i>WMassP&I</i>
Jonathan McHatton	Sean Teehan, <i>NEPR</i>
Patrick McKenna, <i>City of Chicopee</i>	Huff Templeton
Karen Mendelsuh	Benjamin Turon, <i>Empire State Passenger Association</i>
Ann-Marie Messbauer	Kevin Wall
Anne Miller, <i>Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop</i>	Alex Weck, <i>MassBike</i>
Sean Mullen	Allison White
Jennifer Nelson	Leo Williams
Tanya Neslusan, <i>Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop</i>	Rudy Wilk
Michelle Nghan	James Wilson
David O'Leary, <i>Sierra Club</i>	Reggie Wilson
Paul Opalinski, <i>American Athletic Shoe</i>	John Wright
Josh Ostroff, <i>T4MA</i>	
Nick Paleologos	
Claudia Pazmany, <i>Amherst Chamber</i>	
Richard Peck	
Fred Pereira, <i>Town of Ludlow</i>	
Irene Pereira	
Marcus Phelps, <i>Southwick Planning Board</i>	
David Pierce	
Kathleen Plante, <i>Business West</i>	