



EAST-WEST PASSENGER RAIL STUDY

Advisory Committee Meeting #3 – Summary Thursday, February 6, 2020

Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel
One Monarch Place, Springfield, MA

Advisory Committee (AC) Attendees & Alternates

Todd Bailey, Baystate Health

Jonathan Butler, 1Berkshire

Patrick Carnevale, Western Massachusetts Office of the Governor

Nancy Creed, Springfield Regional Chamber

Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

Astrid Glynn, Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Daren Gray, Baystate Health

Senator Adam Hinds, Massachusetts State Senate

Bill Hollister, Amtrak

Linda Leduc, Town of Palmer

Senator Eric Lesser, Massachusetts State Senate

Paul Matthews, Worcester Regional Research Bureau

Thomas Matuszko, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Melissa Olesen, Office of Senator Edward J. Markey

Janet Pierce, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, State House of Representatives

Peter Schwartz, Federal Railroad Administration (by phone)

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, State House of Representatives

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, City of Springfield

Rick Sullivan, Western Massachusetts EDC

Jeremy Thompson, 495/MetroWest Partnership

Ricardo Morales, City of Pittsfield

Maureen Mullaney, FRCOG

Jon Niedzielski, Office of Congressman Jim McGovern

Elizabeth Quigley, Office of Congressman Richard Neal

MassDOT Attendees

Ethan Britland, Office of Transportation Planning
Dan Fielding, Legislative Affairs
Makaela Niles, Office of Transportation Planning
Judi Riley, MassDOT Communications

Project Team Attendees

Drew Galloway, WSP – Consultant Team Project Manager
Ned Codd, WSP
Joel Anders, WSP
Laura McWethy, AECOM
Kate Barrett, Regina Villa Associates (RVA)
Emily Christin, RVA
Sarah Paritsky, RVA

Materials

PowerPoint Presentation
Alternatives Handout

Public Attendees (see pages 17-18)

PRESENTATION¹

Ethan Britland, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, welcomed the Advisory Committee and public attendees to the meeting. Mr. Britland reviewed the meeting agenda and meeting objectives. He said the project team wants to provide the Committee with time to look at the six preliminary alternatives carefully and come back with questions at the next Committee meeting on February 24, 2020. He reviewed an updated study process schedule which includes an additional Advisory Committee meeting. He explained that the project team presented the six alternatives at the previous Committee meeting and will present the results of the alternatives analysis at this meeting. MassDOT intends to narrow the six alternatives to three alternatives and anticipates releasing the Final Report in May 2020.

Mr. Britland reviewed the study goals, study corridor, and corridor demographics. He said the demographics, especially the projected 2040 population change, play a big role in the ridership analysis and the study overall.

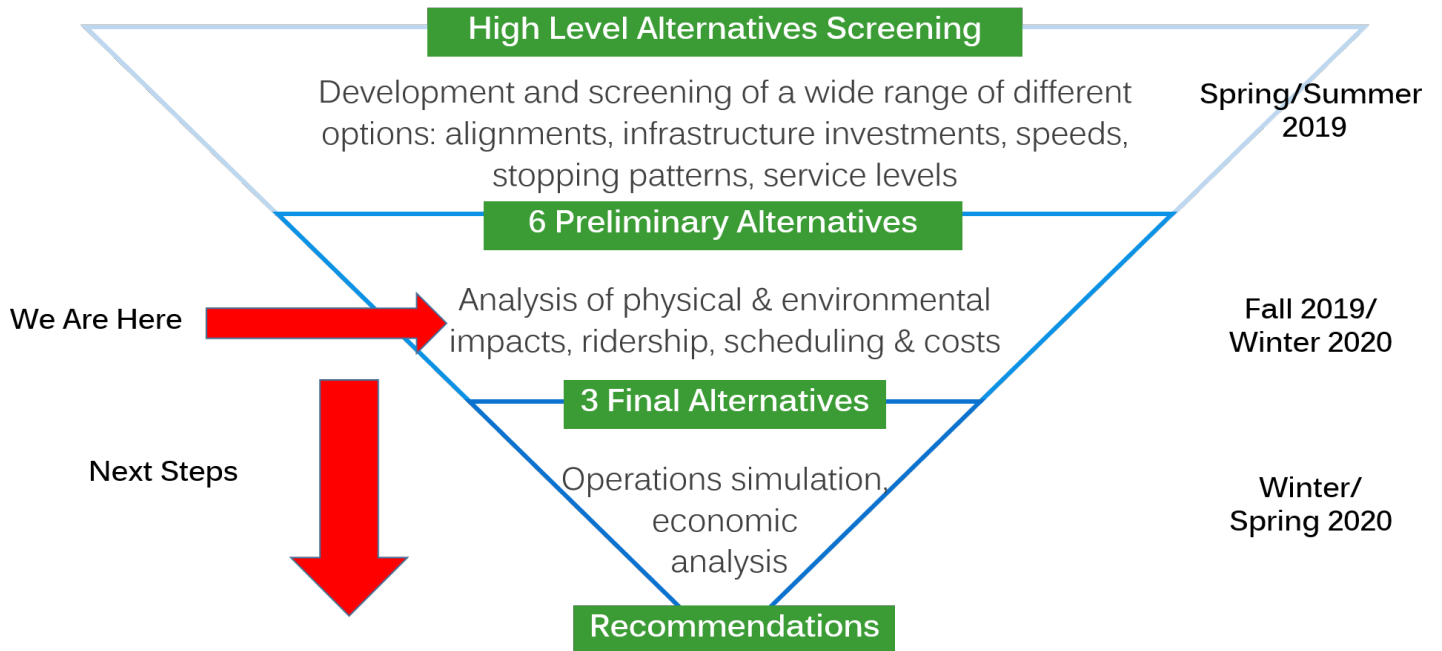
Senator Adam Hinds, MA State Senate, asked Mr. Britland what the general takeaways of the demographic maps are. Mr. Britland said the major population centers are showing an increase in population and decrease in employment, so there is an opportunity with better connectivity to improve employment.

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

Mr. Britland summarized the study background, and 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 analysis process:

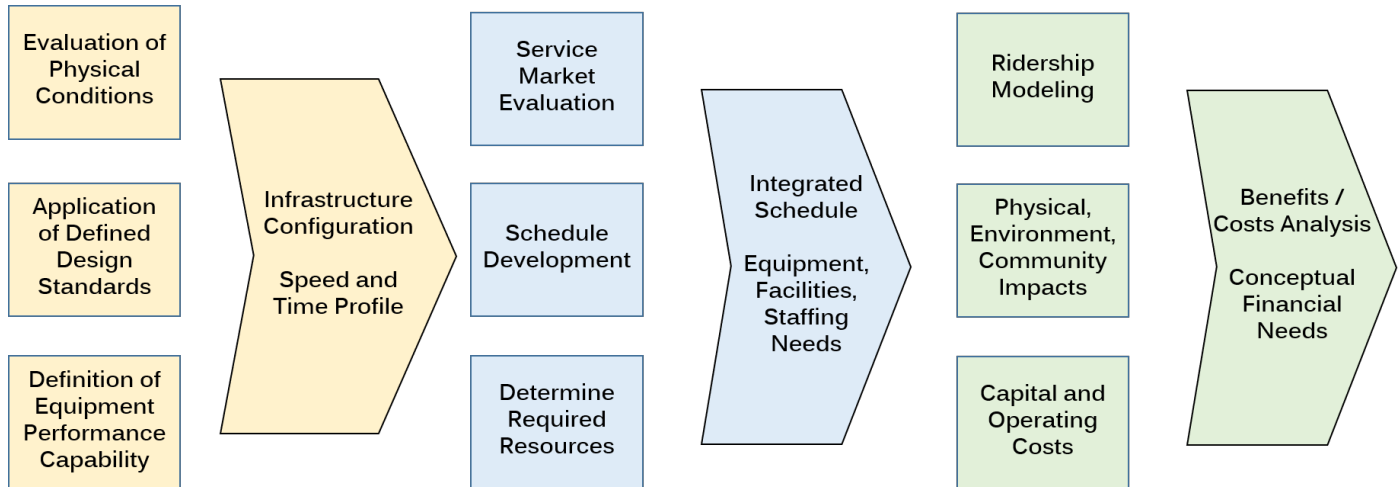
¹ The presentation from the meeting is available on the project website, www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study.



Mr. Britland led a round of introductions with the project team and members of the Committee. He 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 progressively 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. He introduced Laura McWethy, AECOM.

Ridership Forecasting Methodology

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

She 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. She 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. Her 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. Ms. McWethy 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. She 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. Ms. McWethy 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. Ms. McWethy shared examples of actual induced demand numbers in Europe, as well as NEC FUTURE forecasts based on the 2013 survey.

Ms. McWethy 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%

She noted the high percentage of personal travelers is typical for this type of corridor, and a lot of European examples attribute induced demand to tourism.

Alternatives Analysis

Mr. Britland noted the Future No-Build Existing Conditions data was based on the long-range planning by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), which did not assume any increased rail service besides the Amtrak Lake Shore Limited. He explained MassDOT is aware of the need for a sensitivity analysis of potential changes from induced demand to demographics, population, etc. He asked the Advisory Committee and the public to keep this in mind as Ned Codd, WSP, presents the alternatives analysis results.

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 a public meeting on February 12, 2020 and an Advisory Committee meeting on February 24, 2020. He noted the presentation is being emailed to each Advisory Committee member so they can review the information presented and return on February 24, 2020 with feedback and questions. Mr. Britland said there are limitations to modeling, so the project team is looking for feedback from the Committee. He noted MassDOT is open to a sensitivity analysis and no decisions on the alternatives are being made right now.

He showed a table of the study schedule, noting there will be one more Advisory Committee meeting and public meeting in April (dates TBD).

Mr. Britland reviewed the list of key criteria to be used for narrowing the six alternatives down to three, and asked the Committee the following question to begin the discussion: *What criteria should we use to narrow down to the final 3?*

Discussion

Astrid Glynn, MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator, acknowledged the Committee received a lot of information at the meeting. She said MassDOT is open to a conversation on how induced demand should be calculated and how to approach the sensitivity analysis. She said the February 24, 2020 meeting will largely be a conversation between the Committee and MassDOT will act as a facilitator and a resource. She asked the Committee to think about their priorities and what MassDOT should be looking into more deeply.

Mayor Domenic Sarno, City of Springfield, thanked MassDOT and Governor Baker for hosting the meeting and conducting the Study. He said he wants to be sure the final alternative is realistic, sustainable, and financially feasible. He asked how much the State is willing to commit financially to the project if there are no funds from the federal government. Ms. Glynn, MassDOT, said South Coast Rail is a good reference for what the State has done without federal funds, but it is still to be determined.

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, MA House of Representatives, asked if MassDOT has approached CSX about their willingness to share the rail corridor and if the Study is taking into account that there are people who may want to travel both directions (work in western MA and live in eastern MA). He recommended that the alternatives that include bus service be eliminated from consideration. Ms. Glynn said MassDOT has conversations with CSX periodically and will continue to do so. Mr. Galloway confirmed the ridership estimates are bi-directional and the service plans are structured to test travel patterns in both directions.

Senator Eric Lesser, MA State Senate, thanked MassDOT and Governor Baker for the Study. He said it is important that the study team change its perspective on how ridership is analyzed moving forward, as the point of a large investment is to change how the economy is working. He said it does not make sense to assume commuting patterns will stay the same, and noted the interstate highway system was built in areas with low population. He understands the importance of presenting limitations, but he also would like to see a presentation of the benefits, such as business investment, job creation, and environmental benefits. He would like to see more emphasis on how the alternatives could impact the economy of eastern MA as well and how they can alleviate the housing crisis and traffic congestion in the Boston area. Mr. Britland said the Study's next steps include a deeper analysis of the economics and environmental benefits as the alternatives are narrowed down.

Sen. Hinds said he is encouraged by the projected costs, noting the State's billion-dollar surplus and new MBTA revenue. He said the impact of this project would be transformative to the Commonwealth, and he would not want cost to prohibit an alternative moving forward as there are creative solutions for funding. He noted the proximity to Albany from Pittsfield is a huge

opportunity. He asked how land takings in the Greater Boston area are factored into alternatives 4 and 5 that are within the CSX corridor on separate tracks. Mr. Britland said alternatives 4 and 5 are still on MBTA tracks within the Route 128 corridor, and triple tracking is a key component.

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, MA House of Representatives, summarized the ridership on the Vermonter, which is a slow, infrequent service. Based on the Vermonter's ridership, she would expect the ridership estimates for the East-West corridor to be much higher than the numbers presented at the meeting. Ms. McWethy described the ridership methodology, which involved looking at the NNEIRI study. She said a significant amount of ridership on the Vermonter is related to connecting to the Hartford Line and New York City. Ms. Glynn said that is the type of feedback MassDOT is looking for and she encouraged members of the Advisory Committee to think about "hybrid" alternatives if they like certain aspects of different alternatives.

Linda Leduc, Town of Palmer, said it is important not to overlook the Palmer region for a stop between Worcester and Springfield, noting the results of the economic study conducted by UMass Amherst's Center for Economic Development. She said the ridership will increase from the workers in the Lower Quabbin Region. She also asked MassDOT not to overlook the communities in the Lower Quabbin Valley, in which many residents do not own a vehicle and are underserved by public transportation. Mr. Britland thanked Ms. Leduc for her comments and noted the Study includes a 20-mile area around each station in the modeling.

Todd Bailey, Baystate Health, said it is important to look at commuting patterns in both directions, as healthcare facilities are struggling to get good doctors and nurses in western MA. He asked if MassDOT has considered electric trains in any of the alternatives besides alternative 6. Mr. Britland said electrification is something that can be added during the permitting process for any of the alternatives, but currently the Study only includes electrified trains for alternative 6. Mr. Galloway said there is a new generation of locomotive trains that can run on both diesel and electric that are being used successfully in New Jersey and Montreal, and the latest generation of diesel trains are rated EPA Tier 4, so they have much lower emission rates than older models.

Daren Gray, Baystate Health, complimented the study team and said he wanted to echo Ms. Leduc's comments. He lives in Franklin County and he drives 30+ miles to work in Springfield each day. He said there is a saying about western MA: "It is an amazing place to live as long as you can find a job."

Rick Sullivan, Western Massachusetts EDC, asked what the cost of alternative 4 would be if alignment improvements from alternative 5 are included. Mr. Britland said he can provide that cost at the next Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Sullivan asked if the estimated cost for South Coast Rail presented is accurate. Mr. Britland said the estimate shown in the presentation is for infrastructure costs only to better compare it to the alternatives for the Study, but the total cost is much higher.

Bill Hollister, Amtrak, asked if revenue projections are included in the estimated construction costs per passenger. Mr. Britland said there are no revenue projections in the numbers presented.

Jonathan Butler, 1Berkshire, said the Study should consider equity. He noted the Berkshires have lost 48,000 people in the last two generations due to public policy decisions which have resulted in higher populations and density in eastern MA. He said alternatives that include buses to the Berkshires and lengthy commute times are not equitable. He asked the Study to take a deep dive into options that present equitable solutions for western MA.

Rep. Pignatelli noted the long-term constraints at South Station which is why he calls the Study “West-East” and not “East-West.” He said this project could be phased starting in the west and can result in an economic boom for the Albany area, Berkshires, and Boston like the Turnpike did years ago.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Britland then invited members of the public to provide comments.

Pete Hammond said Congressman Richard Neal announced support for \$760 billion infrastructure investment that will use dynamic scoring for evaluation. He asked if it makes sense to align the Study’s criteria with the federal process. Mr. Britland said he will look into the metrics.

Andy Hogeland, Williamstown Selectman, said if the criteria of the Study is supposed to meet the Study goals, then MassDOT should eliminate the alternatives with buses. He noted the point of the Study was to look into rail service to Pittsfield so he was surprised to see a 45-minute bus ride included.

Anne Miller, Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop, thanked Ms. Leduc and legislators from the Pioneer Valley. She said she was surprised the ridership projections were not higher, and she noted the numbers are lower than the NNEIRI study. Mr. Britland noted NNEIRI’s one-seat ride used a model for a different type of service than this Study. Ms. Miller said the Hartford Line has ridership that is 20% higher than what was projected.

An attendee from the Palmer Steering Committee commended MassDOT for including Palmer in alternative 6, which wasn’t the case at the July 2019 meeting. He reiterated the importance of a connection from Albany to the Berkshires to Boston and referred to the UMass Amherst study for the feasibility of a Palmer station. He said MassDOT staff should take that report into consideration if they have not done so already.

A participant from Team Chester encouraged MassDOT to focus on alternatives 3 and 4 as he believes those provide the best return on investment. He said Chester Station is 50 feet from track infrastructure and, as a rural community, Chester has virtually no public transportation. He

asked how the recent agreement between CSX and Virginia impacts what the Study is proposing. Mr. Galloway said he is uncertain how CSX will react to the Study.

Richard Holzman, Chester Planning Board, said the MA Turnpike bypassed many towns that were historically centers of economic activity, including Chester, Springfield, Pittsfield, and Palmer. He said a hybrid between alternatives 3 and 4 would make a significant difference to the state and the population growth in the eastern part of the state is unsustainable.

An attendee from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission said the Study team should look at age cohorts and population growth when conducting ridership forecasts.

Tracy Opalinski, Ware/Palmer Rail Committee, said Palmer is an ideal location for a rail stop as it was proven feasible by NNEIRI. She noted connections to higher education in Amherst, Baystate Health, and biotech and research and development centers would be established with a station in Palmer.

David Beers, a resident of Hartford, said he agrees with previous statements that the ridership numbers are low. He believes the ridership modeling should include induced demand, and noted that the Hartford Line suffers because of low ridership projections with over-capacity parking lots. He said alternatives with bus service should be eliminated. He asked if passing sides and triple tracking are being considered for service between Worcester and Boston. Mr. Britland said triple tracking is assumed for the analysis. Mr. Galloway said triple tracking is necessary for peak period service. Mr. Beers said electrification should be considered outside of alternative 6, even if just between Worcester and Boston.

Dave Pierce, Chester Foundation, asked if the option of purchasing the CSX corridor and leasing it to CSX has been discussed. He noted he took the Amtrak train from Pittsfield to Springfield and it was on time and comparable to driving. Mr. Britland said he can't speak to whether or not the State intends to purchase the CSX line.

Mr. Gray said robust needs assessments documents have been completed for each county and urged the Study Team to look into these when prioritizing alternatives.

Mr. Britland thanked everyone for coming and providing feedback and adjourned the meeting.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE (from sign-in sheets)

David Beers

Bob Daley, *Chester Rail Stop*

G. M. Dobbs, *Reminder Publishing*

Bera Dunau, *Daily Hampshire Gazette*

Adam Frenier, *N.E. Public Radio*

Jon Fryer

Ben Heckscher, *Trains in the Valley*

Joe Hodgins, *WWLP 22 News*

Andy Hogeland, *Williamstown Selectman*

Brendon Holland, *Focus Springfield*

Richard Holzman, *Chester Planning Board/Chester Rail*

Ben Hood, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*

Chris Jackson, *22 News*

Jim Kinney, *The Republican*
Sujatha Krishnan, *CMRPC*
Jeff Kurowski, *Western Mass News*
Clete Kus, *BRPC*
Ben Lamb, *1Berkshire*
Pete Landon, *Longmeadow*
Michael Marciniec, *Palmer Planning Board*
Joel McAuliffe, *Office of Sen. Lesser*
Anne Miller, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
Paul Opalinski, *Ware*
Tracy Opalinski, *Ware*
David Pierce, *Chester Foundation*

Kevin Pink, *1Berkshire*
Cara Radzins, *CRCOG*
Dana Roscoe, *PVPC*
Deanna Ruffe, *City of Pittsfield*
Emmaladd Shepherd, *Citizens for Palmer
Rail Stop*
Tanner Stening, *Mass Live*
Don Treeger, *The Republican*
Paul Tuthill, *WAMC Radio*
[illegible], *22 News*