



EAST-WEST PASSENGER RAIL STUDY

Advisory Committee Meeting #5 – Summary

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Online Zoom Meeting

Advisory Committee (AC) Attendees & Alternates

Todd Bailey, Baystate Health

Jonathan Butler, 1Berkshire

Patrick Carnevale, Western Massachusetts Office of the Governor (by phone)

Senator Jo Comerford, Massachusetts State Senate

Nancy Creed, Springfield Regional Chamber

Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

Astrid Glynn, Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Daren Gray, Baystate Health

Richard Griffin, MassDevelopment

John Hahey, Massachusetts Association of Railroads

Senator Adam Hinds, Massachusetts State Senate

Bill Hollister, Amtrak

Linda Leduc, Town of Palmer

Senator Eric Lesser, Massachusetts State Senate

Thomas Matuszko, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

Melissa Olesen, Office of Senator Edward J. Markey

John Perez, Minority Business Council - Springfield Regional Chamber

Janet Pierce, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, State House of Representatives

Kimberly Robinson, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, State House of Representatives

Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA)

Representative Todd Smola, State House of Representatives

Rick Sullivan, Western Massachusetts EDC

Jeremy Thompson, 495/MetroWest Partnership

Jon Niedzielski, Office of Congressman Jim McGovern

Travis Pollack, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Elizabeth Quigley, Office of Congressman Richard Neal

MassDOT and MBTA Attendees

MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack
David Mohler, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Ethan Britland, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Jacque Goddard, MassDOT Office of Communications
Jon Lenicheck, MassDOT Legislative Affairs
Makaela Niles, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Judi Riley, MassDOT Office of Communications
Brian Kane, MBTA

Project Team Attendees

Drew Galloway, WSP – Consultant Team Project Manager
Ned Codd, WSP
Laura McWethy, AECOM
Emily Christin, Regina Villa Associates (RVA)
Nancy Farrell, RVA

Materials

PowerPoint Presentation¹

Public Attendees (see page 10)

PRESENTATION

Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates (RVA), welcomed the Advisory Committee and public attendees to the meeting. She welcomed Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack.

Welcome by Secretary Pollack

Secretary Pollack thanked the Advisory Committee members for their work to date and their patience since the last meeting in February. She noted MassDOT initiated the East-West Passenger Rail Study (the ‘Study’) because the idea of higher speed rail from western Massachusetts to Boston by way of Worcester has been a concept for many years. She hopes that the Study will lay the groundwork for moving it from a “study” to an actual project.

Sec. Pollack noted the pre-COVID original schedule anticipated the Study would be wrapping up at this point, but the Final Report will likely now be ready in September. She reviewed the progress to date which included narrowing the Study to six alternatives and further refining them since the Advisory Committee and public meetings in February based on the feedback received at these meetings. MassDOT asked the consultant team to go back and further evaluate the alternatives. Two new methodologies for potential east-west rail ridership forecasting were developed since February and will be presented at this meeting.

¹ The presentation and a recording of the meeting are available on the project website, www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study.

Sec. Pollack said the most important message she wants to get across is the need to narrow the Study to three alternatives that will be evaluated further. She said MassDOT is not expecting the Advisory Committee members to make a decision at this meeting on the three alternatives they prefer, but will provide information to assist the Committee in making this decision. She said the Study team will provide the Committee with a week to digest the information and share their choices for the three final alternatives. At that point, the Study team will evaluate the responses from the Committee to see if three alternatives can be chosen to move the Study forward.

Sec. Pollack explained the next steps of the Study once three alternatives are chosen. They include additional ridership modeling and cost estimates, another Advisory Committee and public meeting, developing a Draft Report and reviewing comments, and developing a final set of recommendations on how to move forward and bring East-West rail from a “study” to an “early stage project.” She said MassDOT hopes that the Advisory Committee is ready to narrow the alternatives and noted that the world is rapidly changing including the budget situation on capital and operating side. She said members of the Massachusetts delegation are fighting for infrastructure dollars which go to projects, as opposed to “ideas.” MassDOT would be able to capitalize on any federal resources available with the help of the delegation. MassDOT is trying to balance not pushing the Advisory Committee to move too fast, while acknowledging it is time to move forward and choose three alternatives. She emphasized the importance of finishing the Study to advance east-west rail.

Ms. Farrell thanked Sec. Pollack for her comments and recognized the elected officials at the meeting. She reviewed the process for participating in the meeting using the Zoom application. She introduced the members of the project team and read the meeting agenda (**slide 2**).

Summary of Public Feedback (slide 3)

Ms. Farrell presented the feedback received from the public and the Advisory Committee meetings in February; members suggested that:

- Capital cost estimates differ from the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) Study’s cost estimates
- Ridership forecasts differ from the NNEIRI Study’s ridership forecasts
- 20-mile radius around stations for potential riders is too small
 - Those in rural areas would drive farther to use potential service
 - Ridership doesn’t accurately reflect existing demand, such as student populations in the 5 College areas (i.e., Amherst, Northampton, etc.)
- Ridership forecasts do not include induced demand
 - Potential for new commuters
 - New business, personal, recreational travel

Ms. Farrell introduced Ethan Britland, MassDOT Project Manager, to outline the work the team did in response to Committee and public feedback.

Review of Cost Estimates (slides 4-7)

Mr. Britland reviewed how the cost estimates were developed and the key assumptions that went into the development. He noted the Study process always assumed the estimates would be updated for the three final alternatives.

Mr. Britland noted that one of the most frequent comments received was that the cost estimates in the NNEIRI and the east-west cost estimates presented in February are different. He provided the following reasons for this difference:

- The NNEIRI Study and the East-West Study have key geographic differences that affect cost, primarily that the East-West Study includes a 52-mile segment along the CSX line which NNEIRI did not include. This segment is through challenging mountainous terrain.
- In the Springfield to Worcester segment, NNEIRI did not follow CSX guidance for physical separation of freight/passenger tracks on double-track segments, but the East-West Study did. Therefore, NNEIRI assumed rehabilitation of bridges with no relocation of tracks or utilities, while the East-West Study assumed reconstruction of bridges and relocation of track and utilities.

Mr. Britland presented a table of estimated cost-per-mile for the six preliminary alternatives, and noted they seem comparable to South Coast Rail, which is estimated to cost \$1.047 billion and is 36 miles long. Given the geographical differences with NNEIRI, the adherence to CSX guidance, and the length of the corridor, MassDOT does not believe these preliminary cost estimates are out of proportion.

Examination and Refinement of Ridership Modeling (slides 8-20)

Mr. Britland said another comment that MassDOT heard frequently was that the ridership forecasts between NNEIRI and East-West were not consistent. MassDOT used the NNEIRI model as a base for the East-West Study, which is standard practice. He noted the preliminary East-West ridership numbers and NNEIRI had similar estimates in the Springfield to Boston segment.

Mr. Britland presented the refinements to the Study's ridership estimates that were carried out in response to the feedback received. The refinements include:

- Update the 'Proxy' rail service used for forecasting
- Expand or modify station catchment areas
- Explore % increase of ridership to account for Induced Demand

He explained these refinements will be used upon analyzing the final three alternatives.

Mr. Britland presented the original proxy rail service (Hartford Line) and the new 'enhanced' Hartford Line proxy that includes New Haven to better mimic the East-West corridor. MassDOT will also use the *Downeaster* service as a proxy, which includes the Boston market.

Mr. Britland presented how station catchment areas are defined. MassDOT is using a “straight-line” station catchment area, which differs from driving distance. A 20-mile straight-line distance includes a larger area than a 20-mile driving distance.

Mr. Britland said MassDOT examined three potential station catchment areas:

1. 20-mile catchment area
 - Used in preliminary ridership forecasts
 - Requires station transfers with connecting rail service
2. 40-mile catchment area
 - Captures greater rural population
 - May include driving distances significantly greater than 40 miles
3. **20-mile catchment area with station catchment area adjustments**
 - Revised model assumptions “release” constraint of neighboring Hartford Line and *Vermont* stations
 - Allows riders to drive directly to Springfield to catch East-West service instead of requiring a transfer from less frequent/convenient Hartford Line/*Vermont* service (even if it is a closer station)
 - Better accounts for student populations in Amherst and surrounding area

Mr. Britland explained the third catchment area – the 20-mile adjusted – is what MassDOT believes is the most appropriate for analyzing the final three alternatives. He showed a map of the state of Massachusetts with the 40-mile station catchment area highlighted, which includes most of the state and includes surrounding states, and many of the station areas may overlap with each other. He then showed a map of the adjusted 20-mile station catchment area noting how the Springfield station area was expanded north to Northampton to capture demand from the five colleges area.

Mr. Britland presented the induced demand for east-west proxy forecasts, which will be included in the ‘enhanced’ Hartford Line proxy. He explained it was not appropriate to include induced demand in the *Downeaster* proxy because it is a mature service.

Mr. Britland presented two new ridership forecast scenarios that were tested on Alternative 3, which is most NNEIRI-like and was generally supported by the Advisory Committee and the public:

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Description	‘Enhanced’ Hartford Line Proxy	Downeaster Proxy
Station Catchment Area	20-mile	20-mile
Induced Demand	Yes	No

Springfield Station Buffer Adjustment	Yes	Yes
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Mr. Britland presented a table of the new ridership forecasts with the two new scenarios, noting the new scenarios increased ridership estimates by about 4-5 times:

Forecast Scenario	Daily Ridership	Annual Ridership
Original Forecast – Preliminary Hartford Line Proxy	238	72,250
Scenario 1 – ‘Enhanced’ Hartford Line Proxy	922	278,300
Scenario 2 – Downeaster Proxy	1,181	358,500

MassDOT feels this new range is accurate given the available data, and plans to use the two new scenarios to create a range of ridership estimates for each of the final three alternatives that are studied.

Mr. Britland presented the construction cost-per-rider estimates, with the two new ridership forecast scenarios, which are 6-8 times higher than South Coast Rail. He presented what the ridership estimates mean for the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). He explained that the current federal rules consider BCA as part of the evaluation criteria for project funding, and the BCA, expressed as a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR), is used to evaluate benefits versus costs of investments. In general, a BCR of 1.0 or higher makes a project more competitive for funding.

Mr. Britland presented an example BCR calculation for Alternative 3:

- ‘Enhanced’ Hartford Line Proxy with 922 daily / 278,300 annual boardings would have a **BCR = 0.08**
- Downeaster Proxy with 1,181 daily / 358,500 annual boardings would have a **BCR = 0.11**
- Ridership would need to be 12,105 daily / 3,656,000 annual boardings for a **BCR = 1.0**

He noted that the initial calculations using the new ridership methodology resulted in BCRs lower than 1.0, however, recently proposed federal legislation sponsored by Senator Markey does not depend on BCA in the project evaluation criteria to get funding. Mr. Britland explained that, in addition to federal funding, different potential funding sources would also be considered.

Ms. Farrell paused the presentation to allow Advisory Committee members to pose questions on the updated information.

Advisory Committee Comment

Senator Eric Lesser, Massachusetts State Senate, thanked the Study team and Secretary Pollack for increasing the ridership estimates, however, he believes the estimates are still far below where they should be. He said the comparison to the CTRail Line is inappropriate and New Haven is a much smaller and less expensive city than Boston. He said Portland is a better comparison. There are still regional links missing that should be looked at, such as Providence to Boston, Chicago to South Bend, and Beacon, NY, to New York City. He said the induced demand calculation does not reflect common sense if you look at other major development projects which occur years in the future after rail is built. He would like to see environmental benefits and greenhouse gas estimates factored in as well.

Kimberly Robinson, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), said she would like a better understanding of the economic impacts this rail could provide for the region and also the benefits of the Inland Route in terms of resiliency and how this was considered in the analysis. Mr. Britland said the Study team will quantify short term economic benefits but a long-term look would have to be done under a separate, follow-up process as the Study advances. Mr. Britland said the Study's scope was only for east-west service, but future efforts could build upon the east-west service.

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, Massachusetts House of Representatives, asked if the modeling is not taking into account the potential for connections in New York. The Valley Flyer is considering the connections between western Massachusetts and New York and to not consider this seems to leave out a lot of potential riders. Mr. Britland agreed there is a connection between western Massachusetts and New York but the charge for the Study was the east-west corridor.

Linda Leduc, Town of Palmer, is concerned that the ridership catchment area around Palmer would not include the populations in the Lower Quabbin region if the catchment area remains at 20 miles. Ms. Farrell noted the 20-mile catchment area map on slide 14 shows a catchment area around Palmer that goes pretty far south into CT and encouraged Ms. Leduc to review this map and share her feedback.

Travis Pollack, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), asked what other details will be looked at in terms of capital cost for the three alternatives. Mr. Britland said a closer look at unit costs will be carried out and MassDOT will present to the Advisory Committee more detail on what goes into the cost estimates and how the large numbers are calculated. Mr. Britland said the numbers may change but further detail will be shown as well.

Selection of Three Final Alternatives and Next Steps (slides 21-31)

Ms. Farrell said the Study has reached the point of narrowing the alternatives from six down to three for further analysis. She reminded the Committee of considerations that MassDOT is taking into account and the Advisory Committee and public feedback on priorities.

Ms. Farrell reviewed the characteristics of the six preliminary alternatives, which are divided into three service categories. She encouraged the Committee to review the tables on slides 22-26 as they make their decisions on the three alternatives.

Ms. Farrell said the next portion of the meeting will be a discussion of which alternatives should move forward. She recapped the discussion of a hybrid alternative at the previous Advisory Committee meeting, such as a hybrid of Alternatives 4 and 5 that could include Pittsfield to Boston rail elements from Alternative 4 and speed enhancements from Alternative 5. She also reviewed the discussion of a possible phased approach to the project, similar to South Coast Rail.

Mr. Britland summarized the next steps for the Study once there is a consensus of the three final alternatives:

- Remaining Analysis of 3 Final Alternatives
 - Final ridership forecasts (using both refined base service proxies)
 - Rail Traffic Controller simulation modeling
 - Final cost estimates
 - Benefit–Cost Analysis
 - Funding and revenue assessment
- Present Analysis of 3 Final Alternatives for Feedback
 - Advisory Committee Meeting #6 and Public Meeting #3
- Draft Report – Findings and Advisory Committee Recommendations
 - 30-Day Public Comment Period
- Final Report

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, MA House of Representatives, thanked the Study team. He said anything that has a bus-only portion from the Berkshires to Springfield should be eliminated. He said the Study should not get caught up on ridership and cost estimates as this is a long-term process. He proposes that MassDOT should move forward with Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 and eliminate Alternatives 1, 2, and 5. He believes there is consensus on this and would make a motion to make this decision now.

Senator Adam Hinds, MA State Senate, is concerned the Study is still discussing alternatives that include bus, as it is dividing the advocates and it is important to recognize the value of connecting the Commonwealth. He said it is unproductive to continue conversations such as if the Berkshires will undermine the ability for Palmer to have a higher speed train. He said this is reason enough to eliminate Alternatives 1, 2, and 5. He said continuing the train to Pittsfield opens the state up to a major economic boom.

Ms. Farrell asked the Advisory Committee to virtually “raise their hands” if they would like to remove Alternatives 1, 2, and 5 from further consideration. Ms. Farrell and Mr. Britland observed the majority of the Committee members raised their hands. Mr. Britland said Alternative 5 has bus elements in it, but in discussing hybrids that is something that comes into consideration.

Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), asked if the consultant team could present a potential hybrid as she is concerned with the Committee deciding on a hybrid without any consultation or advice. Mr. Britland he understands her concern and explained the hybrid of Alternatives 4 and 5, which could combine the track realignment elements in Alternative 5 to reduce travel time, and incorporate those in with Alternative 4; however, the team is open to all ideas. Mr. Britland said hybrids can also be developed later in the process after environmental permitting with the public process at that time.

Mr. Pollack said more time to digest this information would be helpful, and a hybrid between Alternatives 4 and 6 could be interesting. He proposed thinking of an alignment that could best benefit travel time with lowest cost. He asked if MassDOT is looking at regional rail services under the MBTA Rail Vision Study and if the East-West Study is assuming these improvements are already made as that may improve the ridership. Mr. Britland said the Study team has not incorporated the regional rail work from Rail Vision into this Study, as Rail Vision was already underway while work on the East-West Study was being done. MassDOT is aware there are projects that would benefit East-West rail that are underway but not necessarily tied into East-West rail at this time.

Rep. Sabadosa asked for clarification about what is being asked of the Committee for the next week. She is happy to eliminate alternatives that include bus, but the hybrid options are very interesting and she wouldn't want that conversation to be cut short. Mr. Britland explained that MassDOT has developed the six preliminary alternatives to narrow down to three, however, a hybrid could be a combination of any of these six. He added that follow-up studies can also occur to identify hybrids. Ms. Farrell said the team would also be interested in specific comments from any members of the Committee who wish to see the bus alternatives eliminated which would make narrowing the alternatives down much easier. Mr. Britland agreed and it would allow the follow-up process to be focused on a hybrid if everyone feels Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 should move forward.

Ms. Leduc asked if Alternative 6 includes Palmer. Mr. Britland said Palmer is included in Alternative 6. Ms. Leduc said if a 20-mile radius is being studied for Palmer it may leave out rural areas and she would not want the alternatives to only consider elements such as speed or cost and therefore remove an intermediate stop in Palmer. Ms. Farrell thanked Ms. Leduc and suggested she share what her goals are for developing a hybrid when she shares her feedback.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Farrell reviewed the comments and questions that were submitted in writing using the Q+A feature in Zoom.²

Mayor Tom Bernard, City of North Adams: *"I would like to echo what Rep Pignatelli and Senator Hinds are saying."*

² The comments are transcribed and only fixed for typos and grammar.

Tim Newman: *“Hello, my name is Tim Newman, I am the Chair of the Great Barrington Economic Development Committee. I want to make a statement about the impact Covid-19 is having on western Massachusetts and in particular the Berkshires. It would be an understatement to say that Covid-19 has completely changed the way urban residents think about city living, causing many to rethink their commitment to remaining where they currently live. Many are afraid of contracting Covid due to flareups in the future, or future still-unknown viruses. The exodus from cities is already underway and will no doubt continue. In short, your ridership estimates from before are totally irrelevant. We are going to fill up with new residents who will need to stay connected to Boston, and I might add, New York City. If you want western Massachusetts, and the Berkshires, to thrive, do the right thing. The limitations of the length I am allowed to write in this reply do not allow me to make a full statement. Please send me a link where I can send a statement.”* Ms. Farrell said Mr. Newman may send his comment by visiting the website.

Ben Hood and Anne Miller: *“Does the BCA include any infrastructure costs from Worcester to Boston, and if so, wouldn’t that benefit riders in that area, and effect the BCR?”* Ned Codd, WSP, said there are a few improvements in Alternatives 1-5 in the Worcester to Boston section to facilitate connectivity to Worcester Station but they are relatively minor costs compared to the rest of the corridor. There are larger costs associated with Alternative 6 as it follows a new corridor, along the Massachusetts Turnpike, beginning near the I-95 interchange.

John Garrett: *“Did the MassDOT consultants consider the impact of Valley Flyer & Hartford Line service on East-West ridership? That was not included initially and receives no mention in Ethan’s slides.”* Mr. Britland said the Valley Flyer is a pilot service so it was not included, but the Vermonter and Hartford Line are included.

Mr. Britland noted that time has run out and the remaining comments submitted in the Q+A will be read by the Study team³. Ms. Farrell said additional comments may also be emailed to Makaela Niles at makaela.niles@state.ma.us.

Ms. Farrell reminded the Advisory Committee members to email their thoughts on the final three alternatives by June 17. Mr. Britland said it seems there is a consensus on eliminating the bus alternatives so the focus now will likely be on a hybrid and he looks forward to hearing from the Committee.

Ms. Farrell thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Joe Aidonidis
Rob Aloise, CRCOG

Matt B
Lorinda Baker

³ See Appendix A for a record of the remaining comments submitted in the Q+A, along with responses by the Study team.

David Beers
Mayor Tom Bernard, *City of North Adams*
Larry Blake
Rick Bryant
Christopher Bunnell
Adam Chadwick
Sheila Cuddy, *QV CDC*
Bob Daley, *Chester Station*
Joshua Davidson
Soumil Dhayagude
Malcolm Ferguson
Ethan Finlan, *TransitMatters*
Jay Flynn, *TransitMatters*
J Fryer
John Garrett
Don Hannon
Ben Heckscher
Andy Hogeland
Ben Hood, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
Samuel Hudzik
Matt Jelen
Andrew Jennings
Jim Kinney, *The Republican*
Sujatha Krishnan, *CMRPC*
Clete Kus, *BRPC*
Ben Lamb, *1Berkshire*
Graham Lewis
Chris Lisinski, *State House News*
Catie Littell
Zane Lumelsky
Michael Marciniac
Joel McAuliffe, *Office of Sen. Lesser*

Nicholas McGee
Jonathan McHatton
Ethan Michalowski
Anne Miller, *Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop*
Ricardo Morales, *City of Pittsfield*
Maureen Mullaney, *FRCOG*
Rep. Natalie Blais, *MA House of Representatives*
Tim Newman
David Nickolos Fite
Tom O'Brien
John Orrison
Christopher Parker
Larry Parnass, *Berkshire Eagle*
Peter Phipps
Brian Pigeon, *City of Worcester*
Kevin Pink, *1Berkshire*
Cara Radzins, *CRCOG*
Dana Roscoe, *PVPC*
Nahrin Sangkagalo, *CMRPC*
Tim Sheehan, *City of Springfield*
Emy Shepherd, *Citizens for Palmer Rail Stop*
Jessica Sizer, *Town of Palmer*
Stephanie Swanson, *Office of Sen. Lesser*
Nathan Taber
Molly Trowbridge
BJ Turon
[2 anonymous log-ins]
[10 phone listeners]

Appendix A

This table includes the comments and questions submitted in the Q+A feature that were not answered during the meeting due to time constraints. The comments are fixed for typos and grammar.

Attendee Name	Question/Comment	Response from Study Team
John Garrett	When can we expect a decision on whether to build a rail project or cave to Peter Pan Bus Co's desire to slow walk this project to death for another ten years?	The East-West Passenger Rail Study report will be finalized in September. The report will include findings, recommendations from the Advisory Committee, and next steps.
John Garrett	What does MassDOT have to say about public faith in their promises to move on to a "next step" considering the NNERI study was shelved in spite of final conclusions promising a "next step"?	The East-West Passenger Rail Study was a follow-up study to the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative Study.
Christopher Parker	CSX is a private corporation focused on the highest profit for shareholders. When they state a cost, it is a negotiating position, not a fact. I'm concerned that the study accepted uncritically CSX's position that track spacing should be wider than it historically was and like it is on much of CSX's current network.	The Boston-Albany rail line is owned by CSX from Worcester to New York. Under federal law, Amtrak has the right to provide passenger service on freight-owned lines, but the host railroad has the right to set the terms for an operating agreement.
Christopher Parker	We know (from the American Travel Survey) that Hartford - Boston and New York - Worcester are larger travel markets than Springfield - Boston and of course Pittsfield - Boston. I'm concerned that the study does not suggest any through routed trains with the Hartford line. I'm concerned that the ridership estimates do not include these larger travel markets on top of Springfield - Boston. I know from conversations with the Connecticut Department of Transportation that they understand this and would like to extend the Hartford line to Boston in order to capture these travel markets.	The East-West Passenger Rail Study included connecting rail services in its baseline assumptions, and service to additional markets may be explored in a follow up effort or efforts.
[redacted email]	I can't see the study, but it appears it's limited to Massachusetts only. Why isn't this being done with surrounding states? I live on the North Shore and am interested in taking rail to Springfield, for transfer to Vermont service. I assume Maine and New Hampshire rail passengers might wish to travel to Hartford and New York City without having to make unusual transfers.	While the East-West Study is a study to examine the costs, benefits, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from Boston to Springfield and Pittsfield, service to additional markets may be explored in a follow up effort.

<p>Christopher Bunnell</p>	<p>Why is Albany being left out of this rail study? A rail connection to Albany would provide residents of Upstate New York and Canada better access to Massachusetts by rail. This would also give them a more reliable rail connection as opposed to the Lake Shore Limited which only runs once a day and faces delays due to heavy freight traffic and bottlenecks</p>	<p>While the East-West Study is a study to examine the costs, benefits, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from Boston to Springfield and Pittsfield, service to additional markets may be explored in a follow up effort.</p>
<p>Christopher Parker</p>	<p>I've just seen an analysis of this study that suggests that tilt equipment be used (i.e., Talgo trains) in order to speed up trip time without needing to upgrade track. Why has this not been included on one of the alternatives?</p>	<p>The Boston-Albany rail line is owned by CSX from Worcester to New York. Under federal law, Amtrak has the right to provide passenger service on freight-owned lines, but the host railroad has the right to set the terms for an operating agreement.</p>
<p>David Nickolos Fite</p>	<p>Is there interest in considering a hybrid of options 4 and 5? Could the intermediate stations in Palmer and Chester be kept, but the straightened out rail corridor in central mass that was a hallmark of #5 be built? The bus portion of #5, in my opinion, has detracted from some otherwise interesting work on the rail corridor through this area.</p>	<p>Hybrid options may be included in the final three alternatives.</p>
<p>jfryer</p>	<p>Could you discuss the environmental impacts of alternative 6 and the permitting costs and timing versus alternatives 4 and 5</p>	<p>Preliminary costs and travel times, as well as environmental and community impacts, are included in the Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Presentation (slides 23-26).</p>
<p>Benjamin Turon</p>	<p>Including Albany NY with its Metro Region of 1 million people would boost ridership and improve the cost-benefit ratio for East-West Rail through to Pittsfield. Connections can be made at the Albany-Rensselaer Station, and trains serviced and stored there.</p>	<p>While the East-West Study is a study to examine the costs, benefits, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from Boston to Springfield and Pittsfield, service to additional markets may be explored in a follow up effort.</p>
<p>Jay Flynn</p>	<p>TransitMatters believes that ridership of the Inland Route is being undercounted</p>	<p>Ridership estimates will be finalized for the final three alternatives using both refined base service proxies.</p>