To improve passenger rail service MA used a $72.8 M Federal grant and $37.2 M in state funds to purchase and upgrade the former PanAm Railways freight line between Springfield and East Northfield.

The resulting “Knowledge Corridor” provides a 23 minute time savings and a more direct route than the route that Amtrak had been using via Palmer and Amherst.

New stations have been created at Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke and Union Station at Springfield has been renovated.
“Knowledge Corridor” Route (49 miles)

Former Vermonter Route (60 miles)
Knowledge Corridor – Current Service

- Vermonter operates one round trip per day, 7 days a week.
- Vermonter route is St Albans, VT to Washington, DC.
- MA stops are Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke, Springfield
  - Northampton is largest ridership (21,500 annual trips)
Knowledge Corridor – Current Service

Annual Amtrak Vermonter Ridership at Knowledge Corridor Stations

- FFY 2014: 14,124
- FFY 2015: 21,541
- FFY 2016: 24,455
- FFY 2017: 27,751
- FFY 2018: 26,698

Legend:
- Amherst (till 12/14)
- Greenfield
- Northampton
- Holyoke (start 8/15)
Knowledge Corridor: Opportunity

- Amtrak is now providing improved and additional service between Springfield and New Haven (the “Shuttle”) with a direct connection to NYC via the Northeast Corridor (NEC).

- MA’s 2018 Rail Plan recommended a pilot to test the viability of extending service to Greenfield
  - Maximizes use of existing asset
  - Acknowledges strong request from Western MA for better passenger rail connections

- MA has negotiated with CT and Amtrak to extend certain Amtrak trains from Springfield to Greenfield (“Greenfield Pilot”).
  - Two round trip trains on weekdays
  - One round trip train on Saturday and Sunday
  - Intercity service with convenient connection through New Haven to NYC via Northeast Corridor
  - Expected net cost is approximately $1m per year.
Knowledge Corridor: Opportunity

- Greenfield Pilot expected to start running August 30 and operate for 2 years.
  - Start date dependent on expedited FRA approval following extended Amtrak deliberations on added safety features affecting freight as well as passenger operations.

- Pilot requires
  - Completion of work on new platform at Springfield Union Station
  - Acceleration of corridor work to minimize later disruptions
  - FRA approval of revised exemption from PTC requirement

- Pilot will test market
  - 24,000 new riders annually projected
  - Intercity service timed to facilitate day trips to NYC

- Marketing
  - Local supporters engaged by PVPC and FRCOG
  - MassDOT has provided $100,000 grant for marketing
  - Amtrak will assist with national platform
Knowledge Corridor: Opportunity

- Amtrak as provider means
  - **Seamless service and connections and ticketing to New York and DC**
  - **Desirable timeslots**
  - **Complete service package: Provides equipment, operations, ticketing, advertising, etc.**

- Amtrak as provider means
  - **Airline-like dynamic pricing keyed to market**
  - **Fares higher than commuter fares**
  - **State sponsor responsible for net cost of service**
Knowledge Corridor

- **Going forward**
  - *evaluate market*
    - MassDOT’s Office of Transportation Planning will review Amtrak reports with PVPC and FRCOG.
    - Supplemental passenger counts if appropriate.
    - Ridership is agreed upon key metric
  - *if pilot successful and if costs are reasonable, MassDOT would seek to negotiate extension with CT and Amtrak.*

Questions?