

**For Immediate Release:**

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## **MassDOT East-West Passenger Rail Study Advancing**

### ***Data released on possible corridors, station stops, frequency of weekday round trips, anticipated ridership and costs***

**BOSTON** - The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Planning Department today released data on specific Preliminary Alternatives for passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester and Boston at a public meeting of the East-West Passenger Rail Study Advisory Committee. The data is focused on six options made public last year and has comprehensive information on possible corridors, station stops, frequency of weekday round trips, anticipated ridership and costs.

“We know how important enhanced rail service connecting Western Massachusetts and Boston is and this data gives us a better foundation to work from as we consider the options,” **said Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack**. “While the costs are sobering and the projected ridership numbers are lower than some might have thought, we will work with the Advisory Committee to develop cost-effective options to include in the final report this spring and work with our Congressional delegation because federal funding will clearly be needed.”

In June 2018, Governor Charlie Baker joined Secretary Pollack, elected officials and local leaders at Union Station in Springfield and announced a Request for Proposals would be released for a consultant team to study the feasibility of east-west passenger rail service. The project purpose was to conduct a conceptual planning study to evaluate benefits, costs, and impacts of a range of alternatives for improved connectivity and mobility in the East-West Corridor. In July 2019, after consultation with the Advisory Committee, MassDOT released six Preliminary Alternatives publicly. Since last summer, data has been gathered on those options.

“Thanks to Governor Baker, Secretary Pollack, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Planning Department, and the Advisory Committee, we now have the comprehensive data to go along with the six Preliminary Alternatives that were released last July in the East-West Passenger Rail Study,” **said Congressman Richard Neal**. “This report provides an in-depth roadmap for how the Worcester to Springfield to Pittsfield line could become a reality. I continue to believe that this investment would be transformative for the region and I welcome this report as it provides plausible directives to undertake. Infrastructure is a top priority of mine as Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and I fully intend to ensure that this rail line is part of that conversation.”

“East-West rail would transform our Commonwealth and redefine what is possible for economic development and growth – not just in Worcester and the Pioneer Valley, but in Boston, too,” **said Congressman Jim McGovern**. “I am thankful that MassDOT is taking this study seriously and moving forward to turn ideas into action.”

At the current time, only Amtrak runs passenger train service which is continuous between the state of New York and Boston, and this service is one roundtrip daily, with the train stopping in Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester, Framingham, and in Boston at Lansdowne, Back Bay and South Station.

The MassDOT data released today focused on the six Preliminary Alternatives, and specific data points. For example, for the shortest travel time of any alternative between Springfield and Boston, the travel time is 1:19 and for the trip between Worcester and Boston, the shortest travel time for any of the six alternatives is 44 minutes. The shortest estimated travel time between Pittsfield and Boston is 2:18.

Included in all cost considerations for the alternatives are track improvements, signals, controls, new or improved stations, storage yard, site work, communications, right of way acquisition and relocation, 35 percent construction contingency, 10 per cent unallocated contingency, and other items. Cost projections are made for the year 2020. All ridership projections are for the year 2040, allowing for service to have been well-established.

#### Alternative 1

This alternative would establish new passenger train service between Springfield and Worcester on the CSX rail line and requires double-tracking of single-track segments. It is within a shared rail corridor, utilizes the existing alignment, and includes a new station stop in Palmer. This alternative involves a bus connection between Pittsfield and Springfield and would have passengers travel on the MBTA Worcester Line between Worcester and Boston. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 4
- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 36 individuals and anticipated annual one-way boardings is 11,150 individuals.
- Capital costs: \$1.9885 billion.
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$27.4 million.

#### Alternative 2

This alternative is for new train service between Springfield and Boston, using the CSX rail line between Springfield and Worcester and using MassDOT’s rail corridor between Worcester and Boston. This would require double-tracking of single-track segments between Springfield and Worcester. It is within a shared rail corridor, utilizes the existing alignment, and includes a new station stop in Palmer. Station stops include Springfield, Palmer, Worcester, Lansdowne, Back Bay and South Station. This alternative involves a bus connection between Pittsfield and Springfield. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 6

- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 158 individuals and anticipated annual one-way annual boardings is 48,000 individuals.
- Capital costs: \$2.1221 billion.
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$41.8 million.

### Alternative 3

This alternative is for new train service between Pittsfield and Boston, using CSX rail line between Pittsfield and Worcester and then MassDOT's rail corridor between Worcester and Boston. This alternative requires double-tracks. It is within a shared rail corridor, utilizes the existing alignment, and includes station stops in Pittsfield, Chester, Springfield, Palmer, Worcester, Lansdowne, Back Bay, and South Station. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 7
- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 238 individuals and anticipated annual one-way boardings is 72,250 individuals.
- Capital costs: \$3.2133 billion.
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$51.6 million.
- Maximum speed: higher than alternatives 1 and 2.

### Alternative 4

This alternative is for service between Pittsfield and Boston on trains on a new alignment, meaning the trains would need their own new track. Stations stops: Pittsfield, Chester, Springfield, Palmer, Worcester, Lansdowne, Back Bay and South Station. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 9
- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 387 individuals and anticipated annual one-way boardings is 117,100 individuals.
- Capital costs: \$4.1305 billion.
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$65.7 million.
- Maximum speed: higher than alternatives 1, 2 and 3.

### Alternative 5

This alternative is for new train service between Springfield and Boston on a new alignment, (similar to Alternative 4), meaning the trains would use their own new track. For this alternative, customers would travel by bus between Pittsfield and Springfield. Key segments east of Springfield would need realignment to straighten tight curves. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 9
- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 381 individuals and anticipated annual one-way boardings is 115,050 individuals.
- Capital costs: \$5.1813 billion.
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$49.0 million.
- Maximum speed: higher than alternatives 1, 2 and 3.

### Alternative 6

This alternative includes new electrified train service between Pittsfield and Boston in a separate corridor, and requires constructing a new rail line mostly adjacent to I-90 within the highway right-of-way west of Route 128/I-95. The rail service includes station stops in Pittsfield, Lee, Blandford Service Plaza, Springfield, Palmer, Worcester, Lansdowne, Back Bay and South Station. Additional information:

- Frequency of weekday round trips: up to 17
- Anticipated daily one-way boardings is 820 individuals and annual one-way boardings is 247,000.
- Capital costs: \$24.9425 billion
- Annual operations and maintenance: \$86.1 million.
- Maximum speed: higher than for alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

In addition to today's public meeting of the Advisory Committee, there are two additional public meetings scheduled this month at which the data on the six Preliminary Alternatives will be discussed: February 12, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the UMass Center at Springfield, and an Advisory Committee meeting on February 24, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel.

Please visit the project page for additional information:

<https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study>

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