

NORTHERN TIER PASSENGER RAIL STUDY

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Public Engagement

Appendix B: Federal Railroad Administration Grade Crossing Inventory

Appendix C: Environmental Resource Maps

Appendix D: Ridership Methodology

Appendix E: Cost Estimation

Appendix F: Benefit-Cost Analysis

Appendix A

Public Engagement

Northern Tier Working Group and Public Meeting Notes
Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Comments
Draft Final Report - Public Comments



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group Meeting #1 Thursday, December 16, 2021 1:30-3:00 PM Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

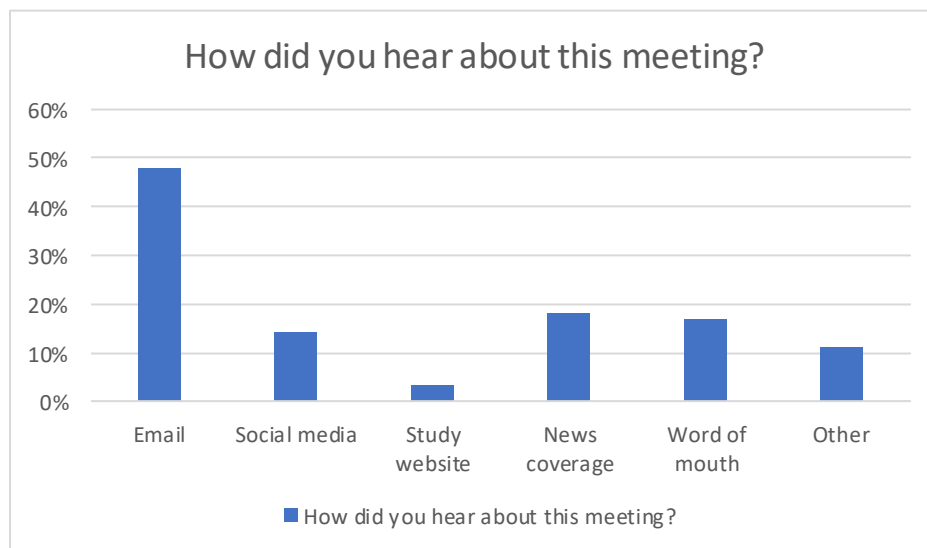
On December 16, 2021, MassDOT conducted the first Working Group meeting for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. At this meeting, the Study team provided an overview of the Working Group purpose and Study background and process. The Study team solicited feedback on the draft Study goals and objectives. The meeting was also open to members of the public, who were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting after the Working Group discussion.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how Working Group members and the public can participate. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the agenda for the Working Group meeting.

A poll is launched to better understand how meeting attendees learned about the meeting. Here are the results:



2. *Introductions by Makaela Niles (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces the Study team including the consultants and their roles. Anna Barry and Paul Nelson (HNTB) are introduced as Project Manager and Deputy Project Manager. Erica Blonde, Leah Epstein, and Lauren Dvorch (HNTB) are introduced as the Public Involvement team. Andreas Aeppli and David Baumgartner (Cambridge Systematics) are also introduced as part of the Study team. The meeting is opened up to Working Group members in attendance for introductions. The following icebreaker questions are used to guide the introductions:

- What is your name?
- What is the organization/institution you are representing?
- What is the one most important outcome you would hope to achieve from a Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service?

Working Group member introductions:

- Mayor Roxann Wedegartner (City of Greenfield): Learn more about plan for the Study and make sure Greenfield is included in the plan.
- Ashley Stolba (Executive Office Housing and Economic Development): Primary goal is to learn more about the project and make sure we are coming to a consensus driven decision.
- State Senator Jo Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin Worcester District): Thanks for the work and assembling a great team to do this Study. Worked with many colleagues to pass the legislation for this study. Most important outcome for this study is robust community engagement. Heard about the desire for robust passenger rail during campaigning and hopes that community can play a role in the development of the Study.
- Glenn Eaton (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission): Curious about how this Study will come out compared to a similar study that was done about 25 years ago.
- Jessie Samwel (Federal Railroad Administration): Here to learn about project and provide help however we can.
- Jody Ray (MBTA): Spent a lot of time working on the Connecticut River mainline which would connect to this corridor at Greenfield. Glad to be able to serve on this committee.
- Susan Templeton (Office of Senator Cronin – Worcester and Middlesex District): District director attending on behalf of Senator Cronin.
- Jonathan Butler (1Berkshire): Important outcomes include better connectivity throughout Massachusetts and the economic benefits that will come with that.
- Josh Ostroff (Transportation for Massachusetts): Goal is more equitable, just, clean, efficient, and modern transportation and all the benefits it provides. Pleased to be a part of this process. Acknowledge legislative partners that have kickstarted this effort. Outcome is credible basis for sustained investment in capital and the operations needed to provide mobility across the state, particularly to underserved regions across the state that do not have interregional connections.
- Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments): Hope to achieve outcome of showing how transformative regional rail on this corridor can be for all of Massachusetts.
- Matthew Russett (Office of Congressman Richard Neal): Transportation legislative aide for Congressman Neal. Thanks for having us today.
- State Representative Natalie Blais (1st Franklin District): Thanks to MassDOT and the team for pulling this together today. It's nice to see familiar faces that have worked on rail and transportation issues across the state. Thanks to legislative partners across the region.

Community participation is so important. Looking for maximum output when it comes to how rail can impact climate goals, equity, and economic development goals.

- Mayor Tom Bernard (City of North Adams): Transportation is key to economic development, business development, supporting tourism, cultural and outdoor recreation. Moment, time, and funding is there for us to think creatively and capitalize on opportunities.
- Peter Lowitt (Fitchburg Line Working Group): Learned the importance of organizing with legislators and the delegation. Keeping communities in the loop and active participants in Fitchburg process. Would love to see the Fitchburg line go the rest of the way.
- Robert Malnati (Berkshire Regional Transit Authority): Here to listen and hopefully be able to provide first/last mile service.
- Roy Nascimento (North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce): Positive economic impacts from this project from interconnectivity of the region.
- Thomas Matuszko (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission): Actionable plan and program that brings consistent, affordable, and reliable service to North Adams from points east.
- Tina Cote (Franklin Regional Transit Authority): Looking to see how this is going to connect with regional transit authority and getting people back and forth to Boston. This is a gap that needs to get filled.

3. *Working Group and Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the Working Group role:

- Provide knowledge, expertise, and perspective.
- Attend the meetings and actively participate and engage, while being respectful of others' time and points of view.
- Review information and provide feedback.
- Share information with the organization/institution you represent.
- Serve as conduit for broader public involvement.

4. *Study Background and Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela reviews the Study background, overview, and process including the public meeting schedule. Through Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct a study of the feasibility of rail access between North Adams and Boston. This conceptual planning study will examine the statewide and regional economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges and identify all necessary improvements to support passenger rail service along the Northern Tier.

The process includes:

- Public Participation – foundation of study and will be carried throughout
- Documenting past efforts
- Market Analysis
- Physical, Regulatory, and ROW ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

Public meetings will take place at key study milestones to solicit feedback from the public. The first public information meeting will be held in the Spring. All Working Group meetings will be open to the public.

5. *Alternatives Development and Analysis Process and Additional Engagement Opportunities by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the alternatives development process. The team will be looking at six service alternatives. There will be a two-phase approach to this process. The first phase will look at two alternatives:

1. Minimum build - The level of passenger service possible under the existing rail conditions.
2. Maximum build - The best level of passenger rail service through major investments in the rail infrastructure.

The public will have the opportunity to review the two initial service plan alternatives and provide comments. Feedback will be used to develop the final four service plan alternatives (Phase 2). Beyond the Working Group meetings, there will be additional engagement opportunities including public workshops, interactive websites, and a comment and subscription form.

6. *Preview of Study Context, Similarities to the East-West Study and Lessons Learned by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the study corridor map (spans North Adams to Boston). The MBTA currently operates part of the line from Boston North Station to Wachusett in Fitchburg while freight rail operates west of Wachusett. Team will look closely at right-of-way, restrictions, and considerations for the corridor. Makaela also discusses the similarities to the East-West Passenger Rail Study, which evaluated potential alternatives for providing new passenger rail connections between Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester, Boston, and intermediate communities. The East-West Passenger Rail Study demonstrated both the importance of increased transportation options and the investments may be required to realize the benefits of new rail service.

7. *Sale of Pan Am Railways by Anna Barry, HNTB*

Pan Am Railways is one of New England's regional railroads and is a 50% owner of Pan Am Southern. Pan Am Southern owns and operates railroad between Fitchburg and the state line with New York. CSX Transportation has petitioned the Surface Transportation Board to acquire Pan Am Railways, and therefore that share of the Northern Tier right-of-way. The decision is currently before the Surface Transportation Board in Washington. Board announced a hearing to be held in January which is virtual and open to everyone. A decision will be issued by April and it will go into effect in May. There may be some shifting circumstances but the study can proceed effectively while the sale process is ongoing.

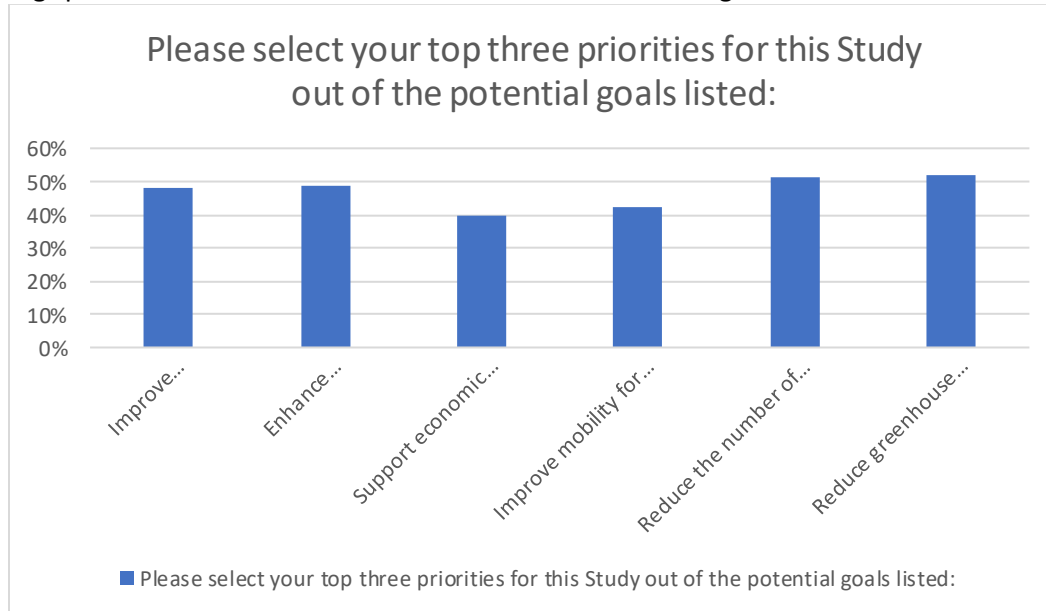
8. *Goals Exercise and Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the link between goals and potential objectives. A goal is a broad statement of purpose that represents a desired outcome. An objective is a specific action to achieve the overall goal. Goal and objective examples are discussed. The draft study goals are as follows:

- Improve attractiveness of the Northern Tier as an affordable place to live
- Enhance competitiveness for attracting new jobs and employers

- Support economic development for Northern Tier businesses
- Improve mobility for transit-dependent populations
- Reduce the number of automobile trips along the corridor
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air quality impacts from transportation

Two polling questions are launched to collect feedback on the draft goals:



9. *Working Group Discussion on Draft Goals, by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

- Mayor Tom Bernard (City of North Adams): There are complementary ideas in the goals listed. We can accomplish all of these things. The last two points relate to climate resiliency.

- Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments): If the goal is to only have three goals, there is a way to combine into three very strong goals that would be supported by everyone here.
- Josh Ostroff (Transportation for Massachusetts): Agree with the other two comments. What kinds of programs would best align with future federal funding streams? Something to keep in mind as we evaluate alternatives and start looking at costs.
- Representative Natalie Blais: Transportation connections is something we need to be looking at with other states and other modes of transportation including RTAs
- Josh Ostroff (Transportation for Massachusetts Coalition): Interested to know if we can achieve travel time of 2 hours and 15 mins from Boston to Greenfield that was provided in 1952.
- Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments): Paul, can you please re-explain minimum and maximum as it related to the alternative's development process?
 - Paul: Have an existing system west of Wachusett that doesn't serve passenger rail right now (only freight). The rail is in a condition that would only provide service at a certain speed, etc. We understand that benefits and costs is always the tradeoff. We want to see what it would look like if we ran service with the existing condition of the rail (with some minor safety improvements). Once we understand the minimum service that could be provided, then we would take a look at physical infrastructure and find a way to increase speeds on the line and understand how successful investments in the rail would be in growing and driving ridership. This will help define the best- and worst-case scenarios for what service could look like. Then take elements of those scenarios, with feedback from the public, to further define alternatives that satisfy the metrics being looked at.
- Senator Jo Comerford: These goals are very synergistically aligned and with some wordsmithing, we can develop economic housing development goals and a climate resiliency goal. Both minimum and maximum build scenarios would have to serve the goals.
- Mayor Roxann Wedegartner: Is it an either/or approach or is it a plan to transition from minimum to maximum? The 2 hour and 15-minute trip time is fine but I think it would be better if it is under 2 hours but that may be moving toward the maximum if you need higher speeds. Is there any plan now or is that this group's job to see if it's one or the other or some version of the transition?
 - Paul Nelson (HNTB): The ultimate goal is an implementation plan. After the first two alternatives are developed, there are still four more service plans that will be developed. Not necessarily an either/or approach as there are possible interim steps. Maximum benefits will be evaluated by looking at both approaches.
- Representative John Barrett (North Adams): Been involved in this project for over 50 years. Good passenger service and broadband is going to grow the area. One of the few counties in Massachusetts that have lost populations. It is essential for economic development. Possibly reduce the length of this Study, it is too long. This is an easy solution and common sense to have service along this corridor.

10. *Next Steps, by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the next steps for the goals and objectives. An overview of the Study Team Work Tasks is also presented with a timeline. The Study's expected completion date is the Spring of 2023. Makaela asks if there are any closing questions or comments from the Working Group.

- Representative Natalie Blais: How were members of the Working Group determined? If we notice any gaps that could be filled, are you open to adding additional members to the group?
 - Makaela Niles (MassDOT): This group is comprised of federal and state elected officials, regional and local representatives from across the corridor, economic development representatives, and representation from rail industry. Overall the group represents a broad expertise and knowledge base that spans the corridor. MassDOT is open to adding new members to the group, however, all Working Group meetings are open to the public. There will also be public meetings that anyone can attend.
- Senator Jo Comerford: What are the expectations for the Working Group? How many meetings to expect/ when we'll get the materials for the meetings? How will communication with Working Group go? How will MassDOT best work with the Working Group?
 - Makaela Niles (MassDOT): This a tiered approach. We will have these working Group meetings that are open to the public. There will be public and stakeholder meetings as well. We hope to hold meetings in person, but we are cognizant of the changing landscape with COVID. We have our study website where we will add materials and resources. Feel free to email, use the comment form, and attend meetings. Agendas will all align with Study tasks that were shared during this meeting.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Strive to notify at least 2 weeks in advance. If there are materials to review, we will make sure Working Group members have ample time to do so. We will have materials available on the Study website and comment form available 24/7. Please reach out to Makaela or another members of the Study team if one-on-one engagement is of interest.
- Jo Comerford: Feel free to get in the weeds. Is there a way to set meetings well in advance? There was feedback that people wanted to attend but they were not able to because it was set meeting with no engagement whether or not it worked for people. We are ready to engage robustly.
 - Makaela Niles (MassDOT): We aim to be agile with public involvement. Thank you for your comments.
- Thomas Matuszko (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission): Getting the materials posted on the website as soon as possible after the meeting would be most beneficial to the group.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): We can consider a notification to the Working Group members when materials are posted to be proactive.
- Peter Lowitt (Fitchburg Line Working Group): What is the level of interaction that we have had with CSX at this point and can we use their acquisition process as leverage to secure any of our goals?
 - Makaela Niles: CSX has been invited to participate in this process. We are aware of their sale process. While both are happening simultaneously, they are separate processes. We hope to continue conversations with our rail partners to communicate our needs and wants with them.

- Anna Barry: The governance paper of the East-West Passenger Rail Study process on the MassDOT website is informative on the flexibility and leverage you have with a private rail company.

11. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager) and Erica Blonde, HNTB*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the discussion to the public and explains the Zoom procedures.

- Deborah Yaffee: I am very concerned about increased diesel fumes /air pollution and also increased noise pollution in my town (Shelburne Falls). There are a lot of home businesses (many healers needing quiet) that are near the crossings where the horns are required to blast. Is there consideration to route the train through another part of town as they did with freight when the Hoosac tunnel was being repaired? I am also concerned how it will impact our real estate taxes here in Buckland and Shelburne and where the stop points will be and the speed of trains coming through.
 - Anna Barry (HNTB): This is a planning study at its earliest stages. All factors mentioned will be evaluated in the development of alternatives. Minimizing negative impacts and optimizing the positive ones is the goal.
- Bob Armstrong: Thrilled with the Working Group. When talking about the goals of the Study, I hope you view climate change mitigation as the most important goal. Decisions about the new train system should be made based of trains running off renewable electricity and not diesel. The other goals related to economic development and affordable housing should be follow-on goals to climate change mitigation. Encourage everyone to watch the movie Don't Look Up.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- General comment: Would trains run on diesel and is electrification a possibility?
 - Anna Barry (HNTB): Team will be looking at a variety of alternatives that deliver travel times in a continuum. When looking at the alternatives it might be determined there is a series of improvements that can be made over time to get us to the optimized service. Could be electrified service or diesel service depending on what the community wants, how quickly, and what the benefits are. Electrification could happen down the line.
- Megan Randall: Live in North Pownal located in Vermont right where the Study corridor crosses the state line from Massachusetts. Some would like to see passenger rail service continue on from North Adams and continue through Vermont to Albany, New York. We in Pownal would like to be part of that. What can we do to show our interest in the expanding the service from Berkshires to upstate New York?
 - Anna Barry (HNTB): Giving input to the Study is important. Local, regional, and state officials should be working with officials from MassDOT to put this type of service on the agenda. This Study may evaluate service to New York (Albany).
 - Makaela Niles (MassDOT): Anna's response is applicable to other comments and questions we received including the regarding service to Williamstown.
- J.B. Mack: I think it's really important to have a goal that the system meets the needs of more than the towns or downtown/village areas adjacent to the rail line. This would imply that the line would be convenient to and support a larger population and that the study

would need to think about multimodal connectivity to the rail line. The rail line will only be as effective and have as much support as the people who have access to the line.

Multimodal connectivity is also important for people visiting towns along the line. Once they are dropped off, can they get to their destinations?

- Paul Nelson (HNTB): This will factor in to how we determine station locations and estimate ridership. We will be looking for connections, both local and regional, to the stations. Want good access to station, regional access to stations. Agree that the more people that view it as a convenient location, the more likely they are to use the service.
- Emily Johnson: Working Group has good representatives from public officials and economic development organizations. Have Native American tribes been contacted to be part of this conversation? Will they be incorporated into the planning process?
 - Makaela Niles (MassDOT): This is our first virtual meeting of the Study; we are still at the early stages. Feel free to reach out with contacts. We are happy to talk to anyone and everyone to engage them as part of the process.
- Anne McKinnon: Not clear what the overall goal of the study is: to establish if rail is the best mobility option or to develop a plan to implement rail service?
 - Paul Nelson (HNTB): Both parts of the question are relevant to the Study. We are ultimately guided by legislative language that was passed and that was focused on the feasibility of rail service. As we evaluate the first two alternatives, we can start to evaluate how those compare to the goals we have developed. There is a feasibility question throughout the process. Once we develop a consensus on a solution, then we will develop a plan on how to achieve it.
- Andy Hogeland: Repeat ideas of going across state borders. Several people from Southern Vermont and Southern New Hampshire that were interested in this Study. Confirm that when you talk about economic development that includes recreation and cultural institutions. Analysis needs to be consistent with the East-West Rail passenger catchment area so we can compare apples to apples on the two lines.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- Mary Westervelt: I don't see rail transportation reducing auto use unless times for travel are comparable to driving. Cost to riders will also be a factor.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- Alex Strycky: In support of this Study. In order to get the public interested and paying attention, it is important to not oversell the project so people don't believe this project is actually going to happen. Don't mean to be skeptical. Good luck to everyone.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- James Starkey: I live in Northern Worcester County on the Route 2 corridor. This area is a HUGE bedroom community for people working east of here that have been priced out of the housing market there. Traffic on Route 2 is awful starting at 5 AM and right through the day. Rail service is badly needed and I am certain it will be used. It's way past time to do this. There was rail service to Gardner back over 20 years ago and it went away. It was needed then and now it's crucial.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- Clint Richmond: Representing Massachusetts Sierra Club. Goals need to acknowledge regional equity. Auto is the only mode of transportation in Western Massachusetts. Goal is

to increase mobility, target population those are reliant on it and those who prefer transit (safer, reliant, and can work while on it). Even diesel train service is better for the environment than autos. Interstate rail connections are important and we expect the study demand modeling will include trips north and south using Amtrak and the Valley flyer.

Consider extensions west past Albany.

- Andrew Smith: Hi, I'm a Selectman from the Town of Orange. As you all know, Orange is located in central Massachusetts so it's not necessarily Western Massachusetts or Eastern Massachusetts. Many times, the people here feel somewhat "forgotten". I guess my major hope is that the Town of Orange will be a passenger rail stop here.
 - Anna Barry (HNTB): The legislation that sponsors this study mentions specific cities such as North Adams and Greenfield, however, the study will assess all other stops that should be made in order to achieve the results. The Town of Orange is in the running for potential stations and will be part of the evaluation process.
- Sean Meyer: As part of the market and transportation analysis will potential climate migration trends be factored in? Put another way, with rising sea levels many experts are suggesting that individuals, homeowners and businesses located on the coasts in subject to chronic flooding will need to move inland. How might the analysis best estimate what that might translate into as far as population changes here in Western Mass and possible usage/ridership of this new rail line?
 - Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics): We are going to be looking at population trends in the region. Working closely with the Donahue Institute which does a lot of examination of populations trends and growth. We may have to rely on existing data and models that have been developed. We will be circling back with you all as the market analysis proceeds.
 - Paul Nelson (HNTB): There is a certain responsibility that this study has to be done within the context of other transportation planning efforts in the state. MassDOT needs to understand how this is prioritized within other needs. A similarity needs to be there in how things are forecasted. Climate change, housing costs, and other factors are pushing people outside of the Boston metro area. There are a few different factors to test and that will be clearly communicated to the public and Working Group so the methodology is understood.
- Bob Armstrong: I would encourage you to consider an additional goal to be reducing automotive congestion in Boston which might mean expanding outlying parking, such as at Alewife or further west so that driving right into the city is avoided.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- Laure Kaye: I hope that part of this effort will be educating the public about the benefits of rail travel for them well in advance of when the extended line will be available. Most people have little interest in switching from private automobile transportation to public transportation except when there isn't any other choice. Will you start on an education component?
 - Anna Barry (HNTB): Part of the public involvement process will include educational materials about rail service. Intent for outreach will be as effective as possible. We will be assessing alternatives for this Study, with securing funding, evaluation of alternatives, and a selection of a preferred alternative to follow. There are many steps of the process in which a constituency will be built at many levels. Public

education will take place at all phases and eventually the service will have to be sold to the people that were originally estimated in the models. Every stage of the project builds with more detailed information.

- Louise Hetzler: Lifelong train buff. I've written many songs about trains and I'd like to offer them to this group as a way to educate people about the joys of train travel. We need this service and need to work on climate change now, electrification should not be an end goal but a starting goal. I am a music educator and have written many train songs while riding the train. Thank you.
 - Response: Thank you, that's a very generous offer.
- Caryl Hull Leavitt: I'd also like to make sure the idea of "increased tourism" is not overlooked for consideration. Our interest in North Adams was very much informed by the idea of the "cultural corridor" described in North Adams' Vision 2030. Perhaps this falls under "economic development" but I think its way to capitalize on increased interest in the area. It's a pleasure to hear of all these very important concerns and perspectives.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.
- Steve Hayes: Just want to add support to discussion of out of state interest: many of us in Brattleboro and Windham County, VT would be thrilled to see any and all of these build out proposals so close to or even possibly interconnecting with the route serving our community.
 - Erica Blonde (HNTB): Thank you.

12. *Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks the Working Group and the members of the public for attending and sharing comments and questions, and encourages attendees to visit the website to submit additional comments or questions, or sign up for updates. The materials from this meeting will be made available on the Study website. Look forward to reconvening in the New Year.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Meeting #1 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- Erica Blonde – HNTB
- Leah Epstein – HNTB
- Lauren Dvonch – HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics
- David Baumgartner – Cambridge Systematics

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Ashley Stolba – Executive Office Housing and Economic Development
2. Cameron Lease – Office of State Senator Jo Comerford

3. Corinne Coryat – Office of State Representative Natalie Blais
4. Elena Cohen – Office of State Senator Jo Comerford
5. Glenn Eaton – Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
6. Jared Freedman – Office of State Senator Jo Comerford
7. Jessie Samwel – Federal Railroad Administration
8. Jo Comerford – State Senator
9. Jody Ray – MBTA
10. John Barrett – State Representative
11. Jonathan Butler - 1Berkshire
12. Joshua Ostroff – Transportation for Massachusetts
13. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
14. Matthew Russett – Office of U.S. Representative Richard Neal
15. Mayor Roxann Wedegartner – City of Greenfield
16. Mayor Tom Bernard – City of North Adams
17. Natalie Blais – State Representative
18. Peter Lowitt – Devens Enterprise Commission
19. Robert Malnati – Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
20. Roy Nascimento – North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce
21. Susan Templeton – Office of State Senator John Cronin
22. Thomas Matuszko – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
23. Tina Cote – Franklin Regional Transit Authority
24. Travis Pollack – Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Abigail Cutrumbes | 21. Brian Domina |
| 2. Adam Frenier | 22. Bruno Fisher |
| 3. Adrienne Nunez | 23. Caleb White |
| 4. Alec Wade | 24. Caryl Hull Leavitt |
| 5. Alex Strysky | 25. Charlotte Minsky |
| 6. Alice Bradley | 26. Chris Klem |
| 7. Allen Pope | 27. Clete Kus |
| 8. Amanda Nash | 28. Clint Richmond |
| 9. Andrew Achenbach | 29. Colin Bratton |
| 10. Andrew Smith | 30. Dan Hodge |
| 11. Andy Daly | 31. Dan Peacock |
| 12. Andy Hogeland | 32. Dana Roscoe |
| 13. Anne McKinnon | 33. Daniel Morrissey |
| 14. Anthony Jewell | 34. Danny Jin |
| 15. Ben Heckscher | 35. Daryl Amaral |
| 16. Benjamin Craig | 36. Deborah Yaffee |
| 17. Benjamin Lamb | 37. Doc Pruyne |
| 18. Beth Girshman | 38. Edie Heinemann |
| 19. Bob Armstrong | 39. Emily DeVoto |
| 20. Brad Harris | 40. Emily Johnson |
| | 41. Enrico Grillo |

42. Eric Buddington
43. Eric Smith
44. Ethan Britland, MassDOT
45. Geoff Kravitz
46. Holly Rueger
47. J. B. Mack
48. Jacquelyn Goddard, MassDOT
49. James Starkey
50. Jay DiPucchio
51. Jerry Lund
52. Joe Kurland
53. John Garrett
54. Joseph Dever
55. Joseph Ort
56. Joseph Pagano
57. Kate Wilkinson
58. Katie Stetner
59. Kevin Pink
60. Kim Robinson
61. Kristine Gorman
62. Laura Kaye
63. Louise Hetzler
64. Lucia Foley
65. Marco Turra
66. Mark Maloni
67. Mark Shapp
68. Mary Holtorf
69. Mary Westervelt
70. Mary-Ann Palmieri
71. Maureen Mullaney
72. Max Hartshorne
73. Max Pavlov
74. Megan Randall
75. Michael Perreault
76. Michael Tripp
77. MJ Adams
78. Nick Mellis
79. Patrick Beaudry
80. Paul Goodrich
81. Paul Tuthill
82. Rich Rydant
83. Richard Nathhorst
84. Rob Culliford
85. Ronald Coler
86. Sarah Bradbury
87. Sarah Robertson
88. Scott Baker
89. Scott Darling
90. Scott MacDonald
91. Sean Meyer
92. Shaun Suhoski
93. Sinait Sarfino
94. Steve Hayes
95. Susan Conger
96. Walker Powell
97. Walter Ramsey
98. William Perry
99. William White
100. Zane Lumelsky



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group Meeting #2

Wednesday, June 22, 2022, 1:00-2:30 PM

Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group met for the second time on June 22, 2022. At this meeting, the Study team provided an overview of the updated Goals and Objectives for the Study, information from prior Studies, the current conditions of the corridor, and next steps for the Study. The meeting concluded with a discussion of issues and opportunities for consideration during the Study. The meeting was also open to members of the public, who were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how Working Group members and the public can participate. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the agenda for the Working Group meeting.

2. *Study Overview and Summary of Working Group Meeting #1 by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study overview which includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory, and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

The Study team presents the proposed set of goals and objectives for the Study and describes how feedback was used to update and refine the goals to include the following:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity
- Minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

3. *Review of Past Efforts by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the past efforts. The Study team has reviewed 25 past efforts including passenger rail and transportation studies, municipal transportation plans/studies, and economic development studies. The Study team has also identified information related to demographics, rail infrastructure conditions, environmental resources, travel patterns and/or trends, as well as future conditions.

The key takeaways of this include the following:

- No previous corridor-wide evaluation of travel conditions along Route 2
- Most transportation planning has been focused more on local travel
- Opportunity for passenger rail service to tie into economic development efforts throughout the Study area
- Need a better understanding of travel pattern changes due to COVID-19

4. *Current Conditions: Market Analysis by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the corridor demographics (i.e., population, cost of living, zero car households and poverty levels, employment and economic development, tourism and major attractors, and the 2020 to 2040 socio-economic forecasts) and gives an overview of the overall travel patterns and travel by vehicle.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) notes the following from the demographic data:

- All data represents pre-COVID conditions (2019)
 - Full impact of COVID on society and travel patterns is still not fully understood
 - Study team will be monitoring trends tied to commuting patterns, other travel patterns, employment trends, etc.
- The Study team is using most current MassDOT-approved population and employment forecasts by UMass Donahue Institute
 - Updated forecasts that incorporate the 2020 Census and potential COVID impacts are in development

Paul Nelson (HNTB) highlights the following from the travel patterns overview:

- Motor vehicles are the predominant mode of travel, especially west of I-495
- Most travel in the corridor is local (same county or adjacent)
- Travel volumes along Route 2 have grown closer to Boston but stagnated farther west
- Travel options beyond motor vehicle are limited west of Fitchburg

Market Analysis: Findings & Conclusions

- Lack of transportation options
 - Intercity travel choices west of Fitchburg are limited outside of personal vehicle use
- No unified corridor travel behavior
 - Trips leaving each segment more likely destined to communities outside the Route 2 Corridor
- Population and employment declines expected to decrease travel demand from Worcester County westward

- Based on current projections, underlying demographic dynamics could reduce major growth in these areas of the corridor

5. *Working Group Discussion on Current Conditions: Market Analysis by Paul Nelson*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) asks Working Group members for feedback on the goals and objectives. He asks what attendees see as the most important for planning passenger rail service, and if the Study team should look at any additional data in more detail.

Representative John Barrett comments that the aging population and loss of younger workers may reduce the employment pool. He asks if this will be an attraction to younger people coming to the area to look at some of these jobs.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that is the ultimate question. He notes that this will be one of the things that the Study team is looking at, especially with the addition of rail service for new transportation options. He speculates that it is more likely to see people moving into these areas who have jobs in other parts of the corridor and then use the rail service to connect with it, and that would almost happen first before big changes would be seen in the underlying employment and job market. He says the Study team can work with folks who represent those types of economic development agencies in the corridor and try to understand in fine detail how that is implemented throughout the corridor.

Representative John Barrett responds that one of the biggest draws Western Massachusetts has always had is the quality of life, and with technology and broadband improving all the time and more people working remotely, this can relieve the pressure on larger cities. He says that this would be an asset for the area with rail service becoming available. He does not know how in depth the Study team has gone looking at this, but says everyone has heard that “everybody is moving west”, and asks if this would be an enhancement of any kind? He thinks it would be, but just takes it as a selling point. He notes that as more people move west, it is a question of getting them to move even farther west than Fitchburg and Leominster by using rail service as a selling point.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that the Study team will be looking at models. He explains that a lot of the growth models for Massachusetts start in Boston and grow out, and the further you are away, the longer you have to wait for it. He mentions that the Study team will also be looking at the opportunity and how feasible is it with something like a rail that might start a different growth pattern.

Representative John Barrett says that just by taking a look at what has been done, it has improved and created growth in Fitchburg because of rail service there. He speculates the same thing will happen into further areas like Franklin and Berkshire, and even into other counties out west with extended rail service.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Representative Blais, who says “To echo your point, it’ll be important to understand how rail will incentivize economic development.”

Peter Lowitt (Devens Enterprise Commission) says that there has been explosive growth in Devens over the last two years. He is not sure if that would have been captured in the data because it is based on the 2020 ACS. He notes that Devens has added close to 2 million square feet and north of 6,000 jobs and people are hiring like crazy to fill up the buildings that are being constructed. He asks if the Study team will be able to refine the Study to take that into account as it moves forward.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that this will absolutely be taken into account. He explains the Study team will be thinking in depth about how this service can connect with the opportunities that are there, so the more information the Study team can find about existing travel patterns to Devens and how likely people are to switch over, the better. He says from what the Study team has learned, Devens is a unique location in the Commonwealth as far as the land available and opportunities for expansion there.

Linda Dunlavy (Franklin Regional Council of Governments) asks if Paul can talk a little bit about how the economic potential of rail in western Massachusetts will be assessed? She also notes that a huge development in western Massachusetts that will not be captured by current data is bringing broadband to so many western Massachusetts communities and to home networks, and she wonders how that will be built into the analysis.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that as far as economic potential, the Study team includes the UMass Donahue Institute, and this is the thing the Study team is going to explore. He says the simplest way to think about economic development is a continuation of existing patterns and that kind of propagation of commuters being further west if you can decrease their travel time. He thinks that is going to be the starting point for it and notes that the Study team would have to look at areas where stations may be, so looking at Greenfield or North Adams and saying ‘organically, what’s going to happen? What is going to change about how people think about travelling here’ and ‘what models can we do to reasonably anticipate that’? He says that maybe the Study team could work with them to get information about people who are currently traveling and to start to find the right information for a good estimate of what might happen. He says the Study team is also going to be working with two prevailing things: the existing population that is aging and starting to retire, and that’s a big part of the population, but there is always the opportunity for other people to come in and fill that. He wonders if the ability of the rail services will be an equal match to that or will one kind of prevail over the other? He also says the broadband is going to be a big part of why people relocate, and the Study team will also be asking about the ability to work remotely as one key drivers of where people choose to live and how much of that is of access compared to other things. He says that just thinking of families with school children and in the school system – are they more or less likely to move just based on the availability of broadband and the ability to work remotely? He thinks it is something that everybody is looking at through COVID and the Study team will look at all the different factors that play into that. This could be shared with the group and once we get data.

Representative John Barrett says that last week he had a trip of 3 hours and 45 minutes getting into Boston. He says Route 2 is worse than what it was in the pre-COVID era and as time goes on, the traffic is heavier. He says what is very correct in all of this is that it’s moving further west, noting that it has gone from Fitchburg into Leominster and out to Gardner now, and anyone who travels and uses the route on the Mass Pike that cuts down I-91 and comes up on the Mass Pike is finding it more brutal. He asks how this is impacting the environment and the carbon impact of all these cars piling up more and more all the time. He thinks this must be taken into consideration and says it is now worse. He does not know what the numbers are showing to get into Boston from the western part of the state and does not care what area people are coming in from, whether it’s Worcester or Berkshire County, or even southern Vermont for that matter. He says he does not know if that is a question or statement of fact more than anything else.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says he thinks that when the Study team looked at it, it was only 2019 versus 2021 data. Based on his own travel experience, it is the year 2022 when the Study team has really seen things

significantly ramp up as far as delay and travel time changes and things like that. He says the Study team can try to find ways to see how things have changed from 2021 on as far as congestions and travel times.

Representative John Barrett says that if you're not out of the city by 1:45pm at the latest you run into three plus hours going into his area.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Representative Blais, who mentions that the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism is using similar LBS data so it might be helpful to coordinate with them. She thanks Representative Blais for the comment and says that the Study team will certainly coordinate with them.

6. *Current Conditions: Ownership, Operations, Right-of-Way by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that as of June 1st, CSX has acquired Pan Am Railways (PAR). She notes that Pan Am Railways' 1,200-mile rail network through New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine is now part of CSX's much larger 21,000-mile network, serving the eastern United States and parts of Canada. She mentions that CSX assumes PAR's half ownership of the Pan Am Southern LLC (PAS) and that PAS is a separate railroad jointly owned with Norfolk Southern that operates freight service from Ayer, MA into Vermont and New York State, however PAS owns the right-of-way between Fitchburg and North Adams. She explains Pan Am Southern/ Pan Am Railway operations on the Northern Tier consist of about 10 trains daily and dispatching responsibility does not always align with ownership. PAS performs dispatching on MBTA-owned stretch from Ayer to Fitchburg and the MBTA has the right to assume dispatching responsibilities under some circumstances. She references several maps that show ownership, maintenance, and dispatching along the track, as well as the class of railroad track and allowable speeds. She notes that ruling grades are uphill grades that impose limits on the weight and size of a freight train, meaning this may require operation of lighter and more frequent freight trains, while heavier trains are slower on uphill grades, and both have an impact on passenger rail service. She also notes that there are 78 total active grade crossings, explaining that active warning devices typically include flashing lights and potentially gates, whereas passive warning devices typically include railroad cross-buck signs, stop signs, and other warning devices that alert a driver or pedestrian that a grade crossing is present.

Ownership, operation, right-of-way: Findings and Conclusions

- Track, structures and signals could support passenger service
 - The track, structures, and signals that allow a given class of track and freight train speeds generally allow for passenger train speeds that are higher than freight speeds
 - The maximum authorized speed on a section of track may be reduced in some areas because of curvature, grades, and approaches to meeting points on single track
 - Significant sections of single track reduce the capacity of the railroad and reduce flexibility for passenger train schedules
- Existing handoff between passenger and freight dispatching has been a successful model. CSX acquisition of Pan Am Railways may bring benefits (shifting trains to Boston and Albany (B&A)) and drawbacks (new shared ROW requirements)

7. *Working Group Discussion on Current Conditions: Ownership, Operations, Right-of-Way by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) asks the Working Group members if any of this information aligns with the Study goals and objectives, what Working Group members see as the most important factors for planning passenger rail service, and if the Study team should look at any additional data in more detail.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Thomas Matuszko, who says “it may be too soon to know, but with the CSX acquisition, has CSX indicated that they intend to use this line? For instance, might CSX consolidate the line through Pittsfield and Springfield?”

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that the transaction that was approved by the Service Transportation Board includes a commitment by CSX to allow Norfolk Southern to operate one of its higher speed trains on that Boston and Albany (B&A) track. This the only commitment that the Study team is aware of that was in the public record and there is no outward indication now of what types of changes, if any, might be made on the Pan Am Southern. It is important to remember Pan Am Southern has two owners, one is the Norfolk Southern and the other is CSX and they are both co-equal owners of that stretch of railroad. She says the Study team does not know yet if they’ll put their heads together and how they will, or if they will, restructure the freight service.

Thomas Matuszko (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission) asks if there is a time frame of when these decisions get made with these types of transactions.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that she does not believe there was a time frame for the change of that freight train that is specific to moving to the B&A, but Norfolk Southern may have an interest in doing that, so they would have an incentive to make that move as soon as they could. She says that as for the rest of the changes, there isn’t a time limit, and it would be up to the individual companies to determine how fast they want to move.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) comments that Norfolk Southern must actually complete some construction in New York before they can move that train, so it is really not clear when that is going to happen. They have not started construction yet.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Representative Blais who says, “I heard that somewhere along the way that the line has an updated signal system west of Wachusett and is there any truth to that?”

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the Study team had understood that Pan Am Southern had committed to the implementation of positive train control, which is an enhanced safety system for stopping trains short of collisions and other factors. She explains the Study team was not able to confirm that it had been installed but there was an intent to do it and they will certainly be looking to find out if that has occurred. Anna says she is glad that was mentioned because it is another move in the right direction.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Peter: “Is there any new train technology that might impact the Study that we might be aware of?”

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that this positive train control is a requirement by the federal railroad administration for most areas where you operate passenger trains. She explains that it is not really new technology, but it is a recent requirement in the last ten years, so that is something the Study team will definitely factor into the consideration of alternatives. She does not think they are what you call new

technology, but this railroad could potentially benefit from, depending on what is looked at, tilt trains or other new features that are not new for providing higher speed services.

Representative John Barrett says he thinks the most important thing the Study team has answered is that it does support passenger service. He says he put in the transportation bill last night knowing full well that it won't go the level that he asked for, but he asked for \$35 million to address two areas of concern here. He says the big elephant in the room, of course, is the condition of the Hoosac Tunnel from Florida and into the city of North Adams, which is critical to getting to the destination of Vermont and New York and to upgrade the lines along the way to deal with some of the things that were talked about with the curves and the grades of some areas because he thinks that needs to be looked at. He says that one of the reasons he submitted the bill is because in a time when there is money available to address real needs, of course they would push very hard for what they call the 'west to east railroad' and the 'east to west line' in the southern part of Massachusetts, beginning in Pittsfield. He thinks that, hopefully, they will be able to get some money over the next couple of years, or at least into the bond issue so that money is available. He says that everyone knows that this is play money that goes in there but aims to get it released and get a commitment from the new governor. He explains that this governor has made a commitment to rail service, but he's going to be gone, so he hopes that the next governor will deal with the issue of putting some money into this. He thinks there will be sufficient support with the western Massachusetts delegation, especially those in the Northern Tier areas and that they would be able to get some money in there. He does not know if it will be \$35 million but says back in 1851 the legislature in the state of Massachusetts committed \$1 million to the construction of the Hoosac Tunnel and 22 years later, it ended up spending \$21 million. He says to imagine what that investment would be in real dollars today. He is sure it would be in the billions of dollars, so he did not think \$35 million was too much to ask for. He also says they must continue to press for that, and he is sure the delegation in the western part of the state would do so. He explains that is just an informational type of thing because they need to look at the Hoosac Tunnel and some minor changes along this route to get passenger service working and would need the cooperation of CSX and others and to think about some of the commitments they made to the STB board in their comments.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) thanks Representative Barrett for the comment and says that while it was said that it would support passenger service, it was not said that it was competitive or high-quality service. Anna says she has a Hoosac Tunnel mousepad, which shows that it is a long stretch of single track in poor condition even on a mousepad, so she thinks it still needs investment.

Representative John Barrett says that he thinks the thing to remember here is there is a historical perspective to this also. He thinks it's the longest tunnel in the United States for train service, or that is what people used to say, and it used to be the longest in North America, so there is a lot of historical perspective to this rail line and doing these types of things, so hopefully it will work, and they will try anything.

8. Issue and Opportunities Discussion by Anna M. Barry, HNTB

- Current conditions and issues simultaneously present potential opportunities and constraints, including the ownership of the corridors and the state of the right-of-way infrastructure
 - CSX Acquisition may shift trains to B&A and may impose drawbacks such as new shared right-of-way requirements

- The current right-of-way could support passenger service, but it has been maintained for freight service with grades, curves, and single track that could limit the quantity or raise the cost of good passenger service
 - Existing handoff between passenger and freight dispatching on the Northern Tier has been a successful model, but new ownership may change the model
 - Many passenger train station locations may be able to host new stations
 - Existing governance, regulatory and funding structures could support Northern Tier passenger service, including Amtrak access rights on freight railroads
 - A new state Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Authority could promote development of new passenger services
9. *Working Group Discussion on Issues and Opportunities by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager) and Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) opens a discussion on what Working Group members see as the primary constraints, things that should be considered, opportunities, and other potentially helpful data sets for the development of alternatives.

Thomas Matuszko (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission) comments that it would be very important to try to get some empirical data to determine the shift in employment patterns and work-life patterns to rural areas to justify the “build it and they will come” or “they’re already coming, and they need a way to get to the other urban areas.” He thinks this data set would be crucial to the Study moving forward.

10. *Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the next steps for the Study goals and objectives. Up to six service alternatives will be developed and evaluated through the Winter of 2023 and the Study is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2023. She explains that the first public information meeting is anticipated to be held in July and the next Working Group meeting will be held later this summer and formal meeting announcements will be available through a few different channels including the Study website, social media, and email. She asks if there are any questions or comments from the Working Group and the public.

11. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), Anna M. Barry (HNTB), and Paul Nelson (HNTB)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the discussion up to members of the public in attendance for public comment. She reminds attendees to use the raised hand button to participate verbally and that they will receive a notification on their screen to unmute once they are recognized. She says that the question-and-answer (Q&A) box can be used to submit written comments and questions and ask the attendees participating by phone to dial star-nine (*9) to raise a virtual hand. She asks that people share only one comment or question at a time and limit comments to two minutes so the Study team can hear from as many people as possible about their thoughts on issues and opportunities that should be considered during the development of the potential service plans and alternatives. She clarifies that this is certainly

not the only opportunity to comment, and that comments and questions can be shared throughout the Study process using the comment form on the Study website. She notes that there are several questions and comments that have come in over the course of the meeting in the Q&A.

Jay Flynn asks if some of those studies are available.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the answer is yes. She explains that as Paul mentioned, there were several transportation studies and economic development studies that were reviewed as part of this process, which included the Intercity Passenger Rail Governance White Paper that was conducted following the east-west passenger rail process and is available on the MassDOT website as well as the state rail plan and freight plan. There were also some regional transportation studies that were reviewed as well, so she recommends reaching out to regional planning agencies or visiting their websites for some of those efforts or to learn about some of the great work they're doing.

Greta Jochem asks if there were speed maximums on the map of the tracks going across the state. She asks if there is an estimated time for how long it would take to get to North Adams or to Boston for that whole stretch of tracks because it looks like some of the maximum speeds were 30 or 35 miles an hour. She also asks if there is an estimate and asks where she can find more information on who is part of this Working Group.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the estimate has not been developed yet. That will be happening as the Study team starts to evaluate various service alternatives and those speeds just tell you in a given segment what the maximum is, it does not tell you what the actual speed is throughout a given segment. She explains that is they cannot just add those up and come to a number, so the Study team doesn't have it now, but it is something that will be developed in the next tasks.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says this is another great question and a great time to plug the Study website where we have meeting materials and information on the website about the Study, including a list of working members. She thanks Greta for those questions and says the next question in the Q&A comes from James.

James Starkey thinks the data showing population growth in Central MA is "declining" along the Route 2 corridor is incorrect. Towns west of I-190 on Route 2 have seen rapid population growth as far west as Athol and Orange.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that there is two parts to that. Part of it is what the Study team has seen in recent history, say like the 2010 to 2020, and he believes that information showed growth in the central segment. He clarifies that the current projections out to 2040 do show little to declining growth. He says that perhaps as those projections are revised, the Study team might see something like the growth you mentioned factor into it. He says the Study team can make sure to specifically look at those towns to see how it's related to that and explains that one that might be incorrect before he thanks James for drawing that to the Study team's attention.

Chris Klem asks if the Study team will develop projections for population, cost of living, and other social/economic/demographic factors that may shift if passenger rail is developed.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains there is two parts to the answer on that. For consistent planning throughout the Commonwealth, the Study team has a responsibility to look at the future conditions that are approved i.e., population, household, jobs, number of jobs expected in each MPO or each region

and kind of making they are consistent with that. He does not think that is going to stop the Study team necessarily from testing the things that might change and how they may deviate from that. Right now, the Study team has not established what future conditions will be tested in these ridership models for the evaluation of service alternatives. He notes that that is a good question and something the Study team will be asking as it is put together is ‘what is the responsible way to ensure consistency with statewide planning standards of practice?’ and then recognizing the potential for transformational changes in how people settle and move around that something like this could do. He notes the Study team is committed to defining how this is talked about and how it will be considered since that will be a big part of the dialogue the Study team wants to have, both with the Working Group and the public, on how that will be done moving forward.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them and says the next question is from Travis.

Travis Pollack (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) asks if there are any intercity bus options in this corridor, and what is ridership for those services like.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that there is no actual contiguous service along the Route 2 corridor. He says there is bus service at key points, but it doesn’t run along Route 2. He says the bus service in the corridor is more sporadic like the bus that visits Williams College and then goes down to New York City and that there is service from Greenfield, but one would have to connect to Springfield to get over to Boston. He explains there is nothing there and there is no ridership the Study team can share, but notes that several years ago, there was a service supported along part of the corridor. The Study team has not been able to get data on this, will be able to share it once it is available.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) says that Paul is right. He explains that the last time there was service on Route 2 from Boston out to Williamstown was about 25 years ago and the state’s project only lasted a couple of years, so it never really had a chance to fully develop a ridership market.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them for their questions and responses. She says that speaks to a question that came in from Rauley, who asked about existing RTA bus ridership and how that’s included into the demand forecasting and some of the OD travel patterns. She asks Paul to talk about that component of it and how some of the RTA bus ridership would be factored either into the StreetLight data or into some of the upcoming analysis for ridership or directions.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that it has. He explains that any sort of transit ridership is a good test of how the underlying demographics are translating into travel by alternate modes, so the Study team will definitely be looking at the ridership in the routes that do exist along the corridor, the kind of ridership they are attracting, and work with team members at Cambridge Systematics and other elements of the Study team to see what that shows as far as predicting or estimating ridership and how that might translate over to rail travel as well.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the next question is from Joe. She says that Paul or Anna can talk about the development of the service alternatives and the process the Study team will go through with that including any additional stops along the corridor.

Joe Kurland comments he is glad that Williamstown is included as a place with a major attractor. He asks if that means extending train to Williamstown rather than North Adams is being considered?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is developing overall six alternatives for this Study and where the trains will stop and where the limits are is certainly open for discussion. She explains the legislation that sponsored this Study specifically mentions Greenfield and North Adams, but she thinks the Study team needs to look at any destination that has the potential to add to the utility and usefulness of the service.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them for the question and response. She says the Study team is running a little bit low on time, and that there are a couple more questions in the Q&A to address before transitioning to some of the closing statements.

Rauley Caine asks how the group plans to adjust for the correlation between the decrease in job growth/employment opportunity in the western segment and the lack of currently available travel options?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says the lack of options is something the Study team will be looking to address directly as far as how passenger rails can fill a gap and the ability to move around. He doesn't necessarily think they are going to be testing the connection between the two direct links but will look at both and how they factor into ridership and service development of the potential alternatives. He explains the idea being that, like the question have been, job growth and employment is on a projected trajectory. Could rail service change it in any way? He says the idea is that by introducing that travel option, does it change who can access those jobs and who wants to access those jobs, and vice versa, how much of the jobs and economic activity in say, the eastern section, could be connected in a way that was not really favorable before?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them both and says she sees a question from Representative Blais, and thinks it speaks to what Anna mentioned about stopping patterns since Representative Blais also mentions coordination with New York about ridership to Albany and how this is something that could be looked at. She asks Anna if there is anything else to add to that?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team has not looked at it as part of today's existing conditions but as alternatives are developed, it is something that the Study team can do.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the next question comes from Jay.

Jay Flynn asks if the Study team is looking at N-S connections to Pittsfield/Springfield/Boston or only PAS service.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says studying this corridor is quite a substantial effort. She explains that the Study team is not engaged in a specific study of passenger rail on those corridors, but the sources of ridership, the connections of the last mile, as well as the coordination of connections, so meaning the Valley Flyer, meaning any service that might be running in the Berkshires and other locations, meaning RTA services, will be something that will definitely be considered in the development of alternatives and evaluation.

George Kahale comments that there is a bus service between Athol and Gardner connecting to the MBTA at Wachusett station, so there is a service between Greenfield and Athol. He explains that this means there is a bus service between Greenfield all the way to Gardner and to Fitchburg, and from there it can be connected to MBTA to Boston.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that the Study team has documented those connections in the Study of current conditions as well.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks him for mentioning those services.

12. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks the Working Group and the members of the public for attending and sharing comments and questions and encourages attendees to visit the website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for updates. The materials from this meeting will be made available on the Study website. Looking forward to reconvening later in the summer.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Meeting #2 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- Lauren Dvonch – HNTB
- Sara Stoja - HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Jody Ray – MBTA
2. John Barrett – State Representative
3. Kali Puppolo – Office of State Representative John Barrett
4. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
5. Matthew Russett – Office of U.S. Representative Richard Neal
6. Marco Turra – CSX Transportation
7. Natalie Blais – State Representative
8. Peter Lowitt – Devens Enterprise Commission
9. Rachel Klein – Office of State Senator Joanne Comerford
10. Thomas Matuszko – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
11. Travis Pollack – Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Anthony Jewell | 11. Ethan Britland, MassDOT |
| 2. Barry Libman | 12. Ethan Finlan |
| 3. Ben Heckscher | 13. Franny Osman |
| 4. Carl Seppala | 14. George Kahale |
| 5. Cedric Ye | 15. Greta Jochem |
| 6. Chris Klem, MassDOT | 16. Ishmael Sharif, MassDOT |
| 7. Clete Kus | 17. James Starkey |
| 8. Cole Czub | 18. Jay Flynn |
| 9. Dan Hodge | 19. Joe Kurkland |
| 10. Danielle Letourneau | 20. Joshua Brown |

21. Julia Blyth
22. Kari Nijiri
23. Kris Gunderman
24. Kris Kretsch
25. Laura Sylvester
26. Loreen Flockerzie
27. Marie Harpin
28. Marla Allisan
29. Meghan Labbee
30. Melissa Glick
31. Michael Perreault
32. Rana Al-Jammal
33. Rauley Caine
34. Susan Bisiewicz



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #1

Thursday, July 14, 2022, 6:00 PM

Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Notes

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a Public Information Meeting on July 14, 2022. At this meeting, the Study team provided an overview of the updated Goals and Objectives for the Study, information from prior Studies, the current conditions of the corridor, and next steps for the Study. The meeting concluded with a discussion of issues and opportunities for consideration during the Study. Members of the public were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how the public can participate. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the agenda for the Public Information Meeting.

2. *Study Background, Study Overview, and Study Goals and Objectives by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the Study background. Through Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct this conceptual Study to examine the statewide and regional economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges. The Study will aim to identify all necessary improvements to support passenger rail service between Northwestern Massachusetts and Boston.

The Study process includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the proposed set of goals and objectives for the Study and describes how the feedback from the first and second Working Group meetings was used to update and refine the goals to include the following:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity
- Minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

A poll is launched to better understand the attendees' top priorities of the Study. Here are the results:



3. *Review of Past Efforts by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the past efforts. The Study team has reviewed 25 past efforts including passenger rail and transportation studies, municipal transportation plans/studies, and economic development studies. The Study team has also identified information related to demographics, rail infrastructure conditions, environmental resources, travel patterns and/or trends, as well as future conditions.

The key takeaways of this include the following:

- No previous corridor-wide evaluation of travel conditions along Route 2
- Most transportation planning has been focused more on local travel
- Opportunity for passenger rail service to tie into economic development efforts throughout the Study area
- Need a better understanding of travel pattern changes due to COVID-19

4. *Current Conditions: Market Analysis by Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the corridor demographics (i.e., population, cost of living, zero car households and poverty levels, employment and economic development, tourism and major attractors, and the 2020 to 2040 socio-economic forecasts) and gives an overview of the overall travel patterns and travel by vehicle.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) notes the following from the demographic data:

- All data represents pre-COVID conditions (2019)
 - Full impact of COVID on society and travel patterns is still not fully understood
 - Study team will be monitoring trends tied to commuting patterns, other travel patterns, employment trends, etc.
- The Study team is using most current MassDOT-approved population and employment forecasts by UMass Donahue Institute
 - Updated forecasts that incorporate the 2020 Census and potential COVID impacts are in development

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the Northern Tier Analysis Sections, explaining that the Study team identified the different parts of the Study corridor as the Western, Central, and Eastern segments/zones. He reviews the following information:

- Total population: 1,751,000 (high growth in East between 2010-2022 and low growth and decline in West and Central)
- Total employment by corridor segment (89% in the East, 8% in Central, and 3% in the West)
- Partial list of major attractors that need to be considered when thinking about the different trip making patterns (the Study team will identify access issues and opportunities)
- 2020 to 2040 projected population changes: growth in job opportunities fuel population growth in East segment and slower growth in West and Central segments
- 2020 to 2040 projected employment changes include a concentration of new jobs in urbanized areas and a reduction in the employment pool because of the aging population and loss of younger workers in West and Central segments by 2040

Paul Nelson (HNTB) gives an overview of the data sources which include the following:

- Location-based Services (LBS) used to understand travel patterns:
 - StreetLight Data: anonymized location records from smart phones and navigation devices
 - INRIX: location-based data and analytics such as travel time and traffic conditions
- American Community Survey (ACS) Journey to Work: developed by the United States Census Bureau based on five-year average of survey results between 2015-2019

Paul Nelson (HNTB) highlights the following travel information:

- 29% of trips in Massachusetts have an origin destination in the Northern Tier communities
- Travel declined in all three segments in 2020 due to COVID-19
- Highest mode share for daily travel in the corridor (92% in the Central segment)
- 92% of household have access to a vehicle in West and Central segments
- Congestion delay is most prevalent between Fitchburg and Boston
- Primary travel is within the Route 2 corridor

Paul Nelson (HNTB) highlights the following from the travel patterns overview:

- Motor vehicles are the predominant mode of travel, especially west of I-495
- Most travel in the corridor is local (same county or adjacent)
- Travel volumes along Route 2 have grown closer to Boston but stagnated farther west
- Travel options beyond motor vehicle are limited west of Fitchburg

Market Analysis: Findings & Conclusions

- Lack of transportation options
 - Intercity travel choices west of Fitchburg are limited outside of personal vehicle use
- No unified corridor travel behavior
 - Trips leaving each segment more likely destined to communities outside the Route 2 Corridor
- Population and employment declines expected to decrease travel demand from Worcester County westward
 - Based on current projections, underlying demographic dynamics could reduce major growth in these areas of the corridor

5. *Current Conditions: Ownership, Operations, Right-of-Way by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that as of June 1st, CSX has acquired Pan Am Railways (PAR). She notes that Pan Am Railways' 1,200-mile rail network through New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine is now part of CSX's much larger 21,000-mile network, serving the eastern United States and parts of Canada. She mentions that CSX assumes PAR's half ownership of the Pan Am Southern LLC (PAS) and that PAS is a separate railroad jointly owned with Norfolk Southern that operates freight service from Ayer, MA into Vermont, and New York State, however PAS owns the right-of-way between Fitchburg and North Adams. She explains that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates commuter rail service out to Fitchburg with 34 daily passenger trains. Pan Am Southern/ Pan Am Railway operations on the Northern Tier consist of about 10 trains daily and dispatching responsibility does not always align with ownership. PAS performs dispatching on MBTA-owned stretch from Ayer to Fitchburg and the MBTA has the right to assume dispatching responsibilities under some circumstances.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) references several maps that show ownership, maintenance, and dispatching along the track, as well as the class of railroad track and allowable speeds. She notes that ruling grades are uphill grades that impose limits on the weight and size of a freight train, meaning this may require operation of lighter and more frequent freight trains, while heavier trains are slower on uphill grades, and both have an impact on passenger rail service. She also notes that there are 78 total active grade crossings, explaining that active warning devices typically include flashing lights and potentially gates, whereas passive warning devices typically include railroad cross-buck signs, stop signs, and other warning devices that alert a driver or pedestrian that a grade crossing is present.

6. *Issues and Opportunities Discussion by Anna M. Barry, HNTB*

- Current conditions and issues simultaneously present potential opportunities and constraints, including the ownership of the corridors and the state of the right-of-way infrastructure

- CSX Acquisition may shift trains to B&A and may impose drawbacks such as new shared right-of-way requirements
- The current right-of-way could support passenger service, but it has been maintained for freight service with grades, curves, and single track that could limit the quantity or raise the cost of good passenger service
- Existing handoff between passenger and freight dispatching on the Northern Tier has been a successful model, but new ownership may change the model
- Many passenger train station locations may be able to host new stations
- Existing governance, regulatory and funding structures could support Northern Tier passenger service, including Amtrak access rights on freight railroads
- A new state Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Authority could promote development of new passenger services

7. *Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the next steps for the Study goals and objectives. Up to six service alternatives will be developed and evaluated through the Winter of 2023 and the Study is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2023. A workshop will be held in the Fall of 2022 to review the initial service plan alternatives, and formal working group and formal meeting announcements will be available through a few different channels including the Study website, social media, and email. She asks if there are any questions or comments from the Working Group and the public.

8. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), Anna M. Barry (HNTB), and Paul Nelson (HNTB)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the discussion up to members of the public in attendance for public comment. She reminds attendees to use the raised hand button to participate verbally and that they will receive a notification on their screen to unmute once they are recognized. She says that the question-and-answer (Q&A) box can be used to submit written comments and questions and ask the attendees participating by phone to dial star-nine (*9) to raise a virtual hand. She asks that people share only one comment or question at a time and limit comments to two minutes so the Study team can hear from as many people as possible about their thoughts on issues and opportunities that should be considered during the development of the potential service plans and alternatives. She clarifies that this is certainly not the only opportunity to comment, and that comments and questions can be shared throughout the Study process using the comment form on the Study website. She asks that any elected officials and members of their staff on the call share their questions and comments first.

Senator Joanne Comerford thanks the Study team for the presentation. She comments on the Western Massachusetts Rail Authority, saying that the Senate followed the House in authorizing language for a commission whose charge is to create a rail authority and legislation to be filed next session and that there is a bond earmark in there for regional rail for \$250 million. She explains that there is a great deal of promise and work embodied in that in both House and Senate members and appreciates that Anna raised that as one of the conditions. She thinks the delegation views it as a positive condition as they see the promise of federal infrastructure dollars for rail in western Massachusetts.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Senator Joanne Comerford for the comments.

Senator Anne Gobi thanks the Study team for the presentation and asks when the Study will be done.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says when the Study draft report is released for public comment, there will be a public review period and the final report will be released in the Spring of 2023. The alternatives development process will continue through the Winter, but the final report will be completed in the Spring of 2023. She thanks Senator Anne Gobi.

Senator Anne Gobi thanks Makaela for the clarification.

Representative Natalie Blais thanks the Study team for the presentation and appreciates how they have woven in the importance of the role that rail could play in western Massachusetts when it comes to economic development. She explains that they are at a crossroads when it comes to a rail network in western Massachusetts and says as we look at the knowledge corridor, the Berkshire Flyer has come into existence since the last meeting which is very exciting. She also mentions that by looking at the developments along the East West rail corridor, through Springfield, Pittsfield, Boston, this is an incredible opportunity along the Northern Tier and thanks the Study team for allowing for such a robust public participation process.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Representative Natalie Blais for the comments and for joining the meeting.

Carl McKinney thanks the Study team for their hard work and diligence. He asks if there has been any consideration not to dead end in North Adams but to go all the way to Albany, New York and possibly tie in Bennington, Vermont. He explains the reason for that is rail commuting because the greater Albany area is a standard metropolitan statistical area of 1 million people, and it is also the home of the Silicon Valley of the Eastern seaboard with good, high paying jobs and the prices in the Northern Tier area of real estate is significantly less than in metropolitan areas. He says if there is a way to move people efficiently with very few carbon emissions, then there would be additional rail traffic and it would also tie in with the North-South line going from the capital of New York down to New York City. He explains that when these lines were put in, the connection was between Boston and Buffalo, New York and stopping in Albany, so that connection has always been there and if this system can be rehabilitated and make it an efficient people-mover, it will be much more positive. He knows the Study must be done based on the data available to the Study team, but he thinks there is an opportunity to make this even better. He thanks the Study team and says he supports the Study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks Anna if she could expand upon the legislation and the potential stopping patterns that might be considered as the next part of the process is discussed.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the legislation mandates that passenger rail service from Boston to Greenfield and North Adams is analyzed and studied, however the scope gives the Study team the ability to expand that into New York. She explains that the line does go through Vermont, but the Study team is able to take feedback into account as the alternatives are determined and examined as the Study progresses. She notes that the Study team has a major focus on those two termini, but even with other towns on the corridor such as Athol and Orange, the Study team is open to what those alternatives should be.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says she appreciates the comments and responses from Carl and Anna.

Robert J. La Trémouille says he is pleased to see this initiative. He thinks it is a reasonable follow up to the South Coast initiative and would strongly suggest connecting Fall River and New Bedford as a future goal since there is an obvious community which extends over state lines.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Robert for the comment and says the South Coast Rail effort is currently ongoing in phase one and she shares a link in the chat for anyone wants to learn more about that project.

Joe Kurland asks if the complete StoryMap that was presented at the second Working Group meeting would be made available to the public.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Joe for the question and explains that the StoryMap from the second Working Group meeting is available on the Study website along with other meeting materials from previous meetings, including recordings of previous meetings.

Stephen Malagodi says he wants to second the remarks from the previous commentator about extending to Albany and thinks this is vital. He comments on the mode of transportation and remarks that no one mentioned if this would be an electrified service or old diesel and given that the second highest priority on the initial priority poll was for health and environment, he asks why there has not been any mention of this being an electric service rather than diesel.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that up to now, the Study team has been examining existing conditions on the railroad and have yet to address that issue. As the six alternatives are developed, there will four different service plans, types of equipment, and infrastructure to consider other than diesel and what there is now. She explains the alternative to provide double tracking, straighten out curves, add electrification, and to include various types of rolling stock can also be considered among the alternatives that the Study team explores.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Stephen and Anna for the question and response.

Representative John Barrett says he is hopeful that he will get \$5 million in the bond bill to move forward with any work that needs to be done, especially in the Hoosac Tunnel to make the repairs that have been discussed so far. He does not know how far the \$5 million will go, but he thinks it will ensure the integrity of some of the track in the area going through the Hoosac Tunnel. He also mentions the importance of something Paul referred to earlier in the presentation which is that along the line in western Massachusetts is the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Williams College, and MCLA in North Adams and Williamstown. He thinks it would be vital to have it in any report as far as transportation goes. He explains people have been using buses for years so by including this it could possibly change come of the data the Study team reviews considering there are approximately 3,000 students in the northern Berkshire area and 40,000 students at UMass, which is a university that also has yearlong sport events. He says he is very pleased with the timeline and progression of the Study. He thinks this rail will be an important part of the economy and future growth along the Northern Tier from Fitchburg west.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Representative Barrett for the comment.

Carl McKinney asks who owns the Hoosac Tunnel.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says it is owned by the Pan Am Southern Railroad which is owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Carl and Anna for the question and response.

Hendrix Berry asks what can voters do to help make the passenger extension from Boston to western Massachusetts happen.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains that participating in public information meetings is a good start. She suggests reaching out to community leaders and elected officials to share the projects that interest them. She thanks Hendrix for the question.

Andy Hodgeland says he appreciates all the work that has gone into this and shares a favorable impression of the Study so far. He expresses interest in having the Study area extend beyond North Adams into southern Vermont and into Albany. He thinks this has been a consistent theme and wants to make sure that data from southern Vermont is also used as the Study team reviews the West, Central, and East segments. He says there are a lot of potential riders in Bennington, across southern Vermont, and over to Brattleboro and he was not sure if this was included in the presentations. He encourages the Study team to expand the database north. He also says there is an opportunity for seasonal attractors, and he thinks this should be considered in the attractors analysis. There is a foliage season, Williamstown theater festival, Zoar rafting, and Berkshire East. He does not think these events could sustain a train, but they may sustain extra train service though the weekends. He says these seasonal events and special occasions are in the queue for the models.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Andy for the question and says the Study team will make sure to capture this in the analysis.

Mariah Kurtz thanks the Study team for being so thorough and for truly addressing conditions that affect Western Massachusetts and considering the caveats such as increased rail access changing residential and traveling patterns. She says this work is very important to the economic development and transportation equity of this area.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Mariah for the comment and says that these are certainly the goals of the Study. The Study team is looking to promote transportation equity, access, and mobility through this process.

Mark Shapp says he thanks MassDOT for this Study. He thinks the Northern Tier deserves the same level of attention as the implementation of a passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Springfield, and Boston. He comments on the fact that people can no longer get to Albany. He explains that the old Boston and Maine Railroad had a line that ran to Troy, and from there one could get to Rensselaer and says out that Amtrak's Albany station is across the river in Rensselaer. He also says there is a short industrial remnant of the old branch in Troy that is still in service with some freight customers, but the Boston and Maine line that went to Troy is gone, so he does not see how that could happen. He says that while he does not know the lay of the track in Greenfield, it seems to be a place where it could be a transfer to a Valley Flyer type of service that goes down from Greenfield to Springfield and from Hartford to New Haven and there may be people that need to go in that direction. He does not know whether the rail infrastructure in Greenfield lends itself to having across the platform connections between the two services. He also comments on how the old station in Williamston is a private property

and is three miles outside of the downtown area and three miles from Williams College. He says there should be a bus connection that could meet the trains.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the Study team will take this comment into consideration in the development of potential service alternatives.

Andrew Randazzo says historically, passenger rail in the United States has been significantly impacted by the prioritization of freight trains. He asks if there has been any consideration of installing an additional line dedicated to passenger service, and if not, why has it not been considered and what will be the strategy to reduce those barriers.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) agrees with Andrew, saying most of the passenger rail rights-of-way in the United States are owned by freight lines and it is something one must contend with when trying to create a passenger service. She explains the addition of second and third tracks and enhancing signal systems creates opportunities and there are ways to allow both to coexist and operate more effectively than just running them on the same track. One of the Study team's mandates is to make sure there is not unduly interference with freight service and the Study team will look at ways that allow freight to operate as they must on what they own and to find ways for a quality type of passenger service. She says it is possible to go so far as to create a new right-of-way, but as the alternatives are developed, the Study team will have to determine the practicality of it all and the costs in terms of modifying system right-of-way or creating new ones.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Andrew and Anna for the question and response. She says that John Orrison, a member of the Study team, could provide more insight to one of the previous questions from Mark.

John Orrison (HNTB) says Mark's statement about the Boston and Maine route no longer existing to Albany direct is correct. He says that there used to be a line that went straight into Albany once getting into the New York State area, but now there is a positive connection that is in place, which is moving westward on the Pan Am property or the Pan Am Southern. He explains there are connections to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and then there are connections to that are also in place to move downward and connect to the Amtrak ownership that goes into Albany. The route is a bit longer than the historical route, but there is a route the Study team could look to possibly analyze train operations to and from Albany.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks John for the response.

Carl McKinney says in connecting with Albany going through Greenfield and down to New Haven and then back up would not make sense for the Northern Berkshires. He does not think this option should be thrown out since a goal is to get people to where there are employment opportunities. He also says if three states are cooperating on this, there is a greater chance of getting stuff through Washington and getting more federal funding for this. Carl says his understanding is that the president is a big fan of passenger rail, but he thinks the goal is to consider both tourism and employment opportunities when discussing the use of the proposed passenger rail system.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Carl for the comments.

Daniel Cantwell says he supports trains to and from New York City, pointing out the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) as an attractor.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Daniel for the comment.

Brittany Polito asks if there is an estimated projected cost for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail and how will it be funded.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is currently developing service plans and alternatives. This includes what those services look like, how many trains, where will they go, where will they stop, what types of equipment do they use, and their speeds. Once the alternatives are established, there will be a workshop on a few of them in September. She explains that during this time, the alternatives will be evaluated, and the cost estimates will be developed in addition to other aspects that will be used to analyze the impacts the service plans would have. This includes the number of riders, how much economic development they generate, and this will be compared with costs for the various types of infrastructure, rolling stock, and other improvements needed to achieve any service plans.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Brittany and Anna for the question and response. She says a question submitted in the Q&A box starts with seconding the idea to continue into to continue to Bennington and Albany, but also asks about the timetables. She asks if Anna if she could speak about the development with that and the considerations of connecting to other services in the area.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains the Study team is looking at up to six alternatives and those alternatives will include where they begin, where they end, what the various stops are in between, the types of equipment that will operate, and what kind of connections. She says some things that must be taken into consideration is why people want to use the trains and the types of connections people have mentioned. These include connections at Greenfield, with the possibility of local bus connections along the way, Fitchburg, and Springfield between the Amtrak service that currently operate through Massachusetts on the CSX line. She explains all these factors will be considered as part of the service plans that are put together, and the best of each will be used to show the different types of services that could be used to develop those alternatives.

John Orrison (HNTB) says the Study team is currently analyzing the connection opportunities in Greenfield for the North South. For the Vermonter there are two, on train each way a day and the Amtrak plan is to increase that frequency to two each way. The Study team is also looking at the connections for the Valley Flyer train. He says once you get into Boston, in terms of being able to make a connection to the Downeaster, they currently have five trips each way a day. The Study team is aiming to make it as well knit into the transportation modes, so comments and questions from the public are welcomed and will be considered in this process.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks them for their responses.

Ben Westbrook says he lives in North Adams and would certainly ride the train to Greenfield a couple times a month and might bring his bike to ride to Northampton. He says that is not a trip he makes currently, and so not algorithmically trackable, but he bets plenty of other people living in North Adams would take advantage of it.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Ben for the comment.

Marcel LaFlamme says he currently lives in Worcester and grew up in rural western Massachusetts. Marcel has returned to the state last summer after ten years in other parts of the country because of rail. He says it is the furthest point west that enables them to live and have a reliable rail connection to Boston for work and travel. He would like to buy a home in Franklin County and says Northern Tier rail service would be the game-changer that would make this possible. Marcel hopes the Study team will take situations like this into account when forecasting traffic.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Marcel for the comment.

Clare Deucher asks if there will be an opportunity to institute any kind of public transportation from Fitchburg south into Worcester or from Fitchburg south to Amtrak service in New York City.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says Amtrak currently operates service from Greenfield to Springfield and then down to New Haven, as well as the Connecticut service that runs from Springfield to New Haven with a high-speed rail connection there in New Haven for New York City. The other services between Fitchburg and Worcester or other locations are not necessarily the focus of the Study, but it is possible that the service plans and service alternatives that are developed might inspire other studies or initiatives to create the connection that could compliment a service that is being reviewed in this Study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Clare for the comment.

Ben Westbrook says the trains would be packed for bigger concert events at MASS MoCA.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Ben for the comment and says the Study team will be looking at big attractors across the Study corridor.

Carl McKinney asks if there is any way to help the Study team and suggests hosting community information sessions in the towns along the Northern Tier.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says one way to help would be through letting people know about this process. The Study team would like to reach out to as many people as possible and to receive input from the public. She says there will be a workshop later this year to further discuss the development of service alternatives and it would be helpful if this information was shared by people who are familiar with the Study.

J M says going to Boston late in the day sometimes eliminates getting the commuter rail to the South Shore and would like to get there early in the day to make tourism and visiting family easier.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says this comment speaks to Paul's portion of the presentation regarding trip making and is a big consideration of this process.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says these are the considerations that the Study team is looking at as the alternative service plans are put together. She says this includes the types of trips people want to make and what time of day is most suitable for making them the Study team is trying to put together schedules that accommodate a variety of needs including making connections to other locations whether it is in Maine or in the south shore of Massachusetts.

John Orrison (HNTB) says as the Study team develops intercity and passenger train schedules, and they will look at arrival times at North Station and then commutes between North and South Station to be

able to make some positive connections for travelling southward or vice versa. He says this comment will be considered as the schedules are developed.

Joe Kurland asks what can be done to create a cross platform connection at greenfield given that the current station platform is not between the tracks as the old station was.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is not quite there at this phase of Study but will look at the service alternatives which will include those connections. She explains that as the Study team goes into the next phase after that, they will look at what is required by way of infrastructure improvements to make those changes. She says that is a challenging location but as the Study team looks at how it could be made, the Study team has expert track station staff who can support.

Richard Duncan asks how many trips per day and per week are being considered.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team is in the process of determining this now and no conclusions have been drawn at this point, however there will be up to six alternatives that will likely include a variety of numbers per day and days per week so that will be something that to discuss further in the fall when the alternatives are announced the workshop is held.

Mary-Ann Palmieri says she hopes cost will be considered since working people and the elderly will be using this corrido.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says that will be included in this process.

Mark Shapp asks if the trains are going to terminate and originate in North Adams, has any thought been given regarding a layover facility there so trains can overnight and be serviced to kick off the next morning's service to get to Boston at a reasonable hour. Additionally, he asks if the Study team has considered how the cars will be cleaned and about having to overnight trains in North Adams and talked to anyone from there about where a layover facility could be built. He points out that the Berkshire Flyer was conceived by people who did not seem to mind that Berkshire residents could not use the service. This service is only configured for people in the New York metropolitan region to go up to Pittsburgh and the Berkshires and come back on Sunday afternoon. He says as a practical matter, the people who live in Berkshire have been excluded and sees things in the way of getting that service expanded so it can a "two-way street".

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says this is an excellent point and everyone on the Study team go back many years in the railroad business and this is exactly what we will be considering as the services are put together. She explains there are many ways to do services of these types and the most efficient way would be to have a layover at the end of the line and depending on availability, there must be a place to park the trains and they would need to be serviced overnight with fuel and sand in the locomotives. She also says the trains would need to be cleaned, including the toilets, with portable trucks, food would need to be supplied if they have a food service onboard. These are all questions that will be considered as the Study team evaluates the alternatives. She also says the Study team will think of the most cost-effective way to supply all the needs that the trains and customers will have for the kind of alternatives that are being put together.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Mark and Anna for the questions and responses.

Jerry Lund asks if the Study team could send out more notices with links to the upcoming meetings and evolving.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says she is excited to let everyone that a monthly Study update e-newsletters are being sent out and encourages everyone to visit the Study website and to sign up for Study updates to receive information on the Study or to receive those e-newsletters and meeting information. This is also posted on the Study website, social media, and via email whenever there are formal meetings and workshops. She thanks Jerry for this question.

Ben Heckscher says that in the 1950s, the Boston & Maine Railroad provided passenger service between Boston North Station and Greenfield that took two hours and fifteen minutes. He asks if it is reasonable to expect that the service offering proposed in the Study will at least be able to meet this schedule.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the Study team has been looking at the historical timetables as they have been developed. She says that while she is not familiar with that trip time, the Study team will be looking at the historic speeds and train services and what kind of trip times they had as the trip times for this Study get developed for some of the early alternatives. One of the Study team's goals is to make them competitive with the historic record to whatever degree is reasonable now.

John Orrison (HNTB) thinks this was a great question about the transit time between points, especially in Greenfield and in North Station. The Study team has been looking through the whole series of schedules including 1946 and 1950's schedules. He says by getting that data, the Study team would like to compare it with what could be created with this train service in the future. John says that the good news is the MBTA has spent a lot of money on upgrading the Fitchburg lines back around 2008 through 2012 and that was double tracking and increasing speeds from 60 miles an hour to 79 miles an hour. He explains they have actually reduced the transit times between North Station and Fitchburg than what you could achieve back in the 1950's. The second part of this is that in 2022 passenger equipment is much more advanced than what was available in the 1950's. He says the 1950's equipment is called heritage equipment and it could only go so much faster, a little bit faster than freight trains around curves but today's MBTA and Amtrak equipment can actually achieve higher speeds around the existing curves that are there. John says he is not ready to give a report on it, but the Study team is taking those facts into consideration in terms of what was historical transit times and what are achievable for today.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks everyone for the questions and responses.

Constance DiMarino thanks everyone who has supported and promoted expanding rail in Western, MA. She says she lives in Greenfield and experiences the benefits of the local train.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Constance for the comment.

9. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks members of the public for attending and sharing their comments and questions. She encourages attendees to visit the Study website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for Study updates and monthly e-newsletter. The materials from this meeting, including the StoryMap presentation, video recording, and meeting summary, will be made available on the Study website.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- John Orrison – HNTB
- Lauren Dvonch – HNTB
- Sara Stoja - HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Jo Comerford – State Senator
2. John Barrett – State Representative
3. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
4. Natalie Blais – State Representative
5. Peter Lowitt – Devens Enterprise Commission

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Alan Butler | 27. George Snow |
| 2. Alec Wade | 28. Greg Vine |
| 3. Andrew Randazzo | 29. Hendrix Berry |
| 4. Andrew Smith | 30. Holly Rueger |
| 5. Andy Hodgeland | 31. Huff Templeton |
| 6. Anne Gobi, State Senator | 32. J M |
| 7. Bekkzoe Eowind | 33. Jeffrey Lin |
| 8. Ben Heckscher | 34. Jerry Lund |
| 9. Ben Westbrook | 35. Joe Kurland |
| 10. Brad Harris | 36. Johan Sednek |
| 11. Brittany Polito | 37. John Kapitzky |
| 12. Bryan Smith | 38. Kara Walsh |
| 13. Carl McKinney | 39. Karen Benko |
| 14. Charlotte Minsky | 40. Katie Stetner |
| 15. Christine Sullivan | 41. Keith McGuirk |
| 16. Clare Deucher | 42. Kelan O'Brien |
| 17. Clete Kus | 43. Kurt Schellenberg |
| 18. Constance DiMarino | 44. Laura Hanson |
| 19. Dale LaBonte | 45. Lora Wade |
| 20. Dana Roscoe | 46. Marcel LaFlamme |
| 21. Daniel Cantwell | 47. Marcia Berkall |
| 22. David Knavel | 48. Margaret Scarsdale |
| 23. Deborah Benoit | 49. Mariah Kurtz |
| 24. Douglas Stotz | 50. Mark Shapp |
| 25. Eric Smith | 51. Mary Byrne |
| 26. Gabrielle Taylor | 52. Mary-Ann Palmieri |

- 53. Max Pavlov
- 54. Michele Spring-More
- 55. Patricia Duffy
- 56. Paula O'Halloran
- 57. Peter Gagliardi
- 58. Richard Duncan
- 59. Robert J. La Trémouille
- 60. Roy Kimmel
- 61. Sarah Markham
- 62. Sharon Moulton
- 63. Shaw Izikson
- 64. Stephen Malagodi
- 65. Tom Hankinson
- 66. Travis Condon
- 67. Walker Powell
- 68. Werner Gertje



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Workshop

Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 6:00 PM

Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a public workshop on January 11, 2023. At this workshop, the Study team presented the two initial service plan alternatives. The information was presented in three modules, and each module concluded with a discussion. The feedback from this meeting will be used to inform the development of four additional service plan alternatives.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how the public can participate. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the agenda for the public workshop, which includes an overview of the Study process and a presentation on three modules, each one followed by a discussion.

2. *Study Process by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the Study process.

The Study process includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains that Task 5 (potential service plans and alternatives) and Task 6 (alternatives evaluation and cost estimate) will be discussed at this workshop. Based on the feedback received, the Study team will refine the two initial alternatives and four additional alternatives will be developed and evaluated. Recommendations will also be developed, and all this information will be documented in a draft report which will be released for public comment, then finalized in a final report. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks elected officials to share any remarks.

Senator Joanne Comerford thanks the Study team for the presentation, the regional planning agencies who have offered counsel and informed the delegation, and all colleagues in attendance.

Senator John Cronin thanks the Study team for the presentation. He also thanks Senator Comerford for her leadership.

Representative Natalie Blais thanks the Study team for the presentation and thanks all colleagues and Massachusetts residents in attendance for such an important rail project in Massachusetts. She says there is so much potential for rail in Western Massachusetts and values all the opportunities for public participation.

Representative Mindy Domb thanks the Study team for the presentation and all opportunities for public comment. She thanks Senator Comerford and Representative Blais for their leadership, as well as the members of the public in attendance as this Study advances.

3. Module 1: Alternatives Development Approach and Methods by Anna Barry, HNTB

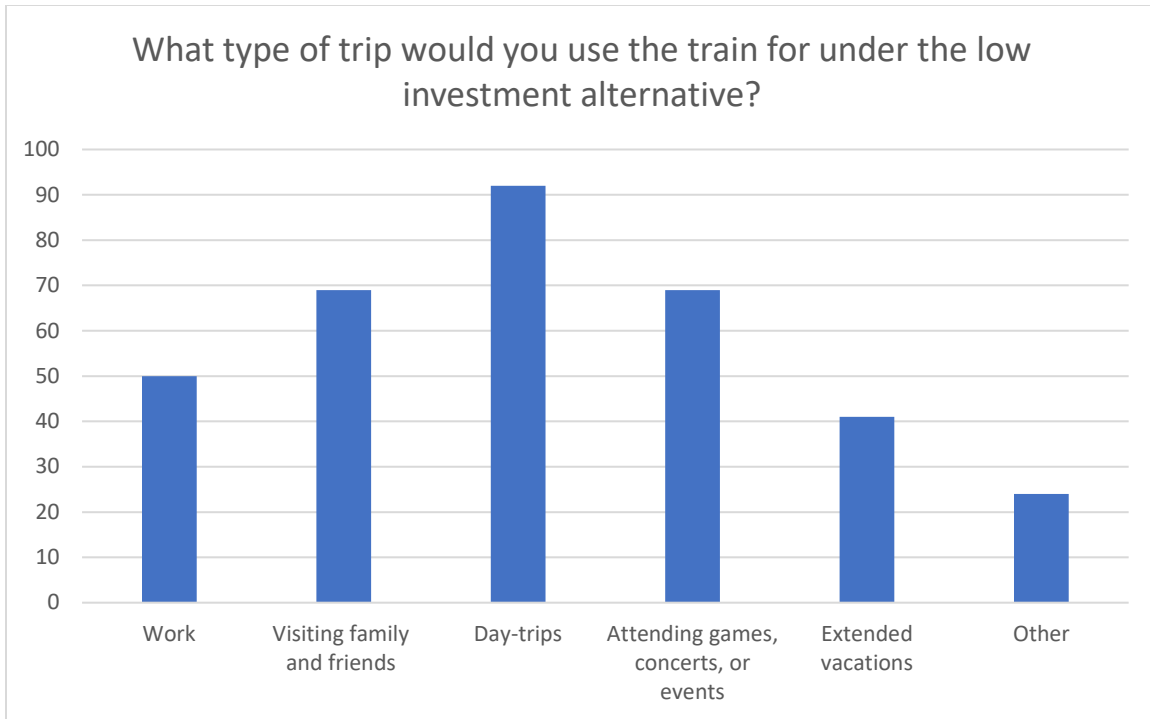
Anna Barry (HNTB) reviews the alternatives development approach and methods as part of module 1. The Study team will evaluate alternatives in two phases. Phase 1 includes a lower investment option and a higher investment option. Phase 2 will include four additional alternatives, and the alternatives inform the Study's overall recommendations and implementation plan. This process relies on technical work tied to rail simulation, ridership estimation, and construction cost estimation. The similarities and differences between the two alternatives are reviewed.

Anna Barry (HNTB) reviews the following:

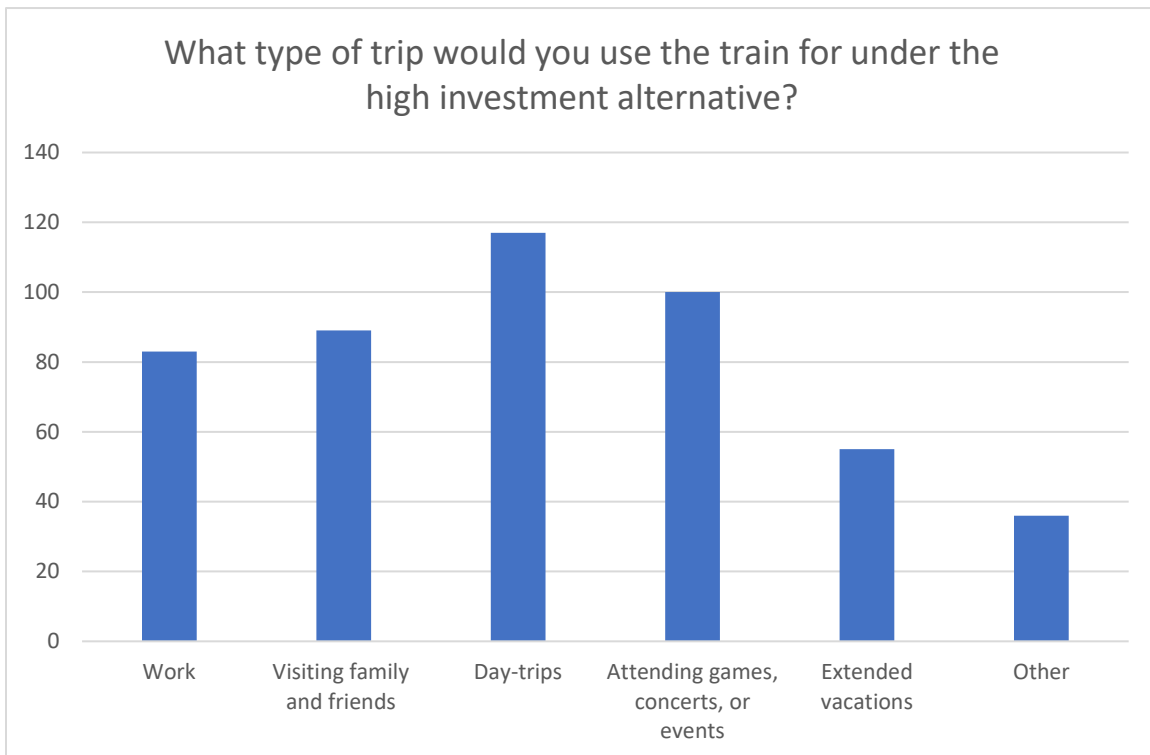
- Rail Simulations 101:
 - Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) is the industry standard for simulating rail service to estimate train performance and trip times for each train and involves the following steps:
 - Step One: The simulation model is coded using detailed inputs about track designs, train configurations, and their proposed schedules.
 - Step Two: The RTC software “dispatches” the trains through the network. RTC will attempt to resolve any conflicts by delaying or rerouting a train.
 - Step Three: The RTC software resolves all conflicts and produces detailed outputs on the systems performance.
 - These outputs will be compared between alternatives to evaluate the benefit of the proposed infrastructure or operational change and the potential service alternatives between North Adams and Boston.
- Rail Simulation Inputs:
 - Track condition (e.g., FRA track class speed and timetable speed restrictions)
 - Track geometry (e.g., grade and curves)
 - Track configuration (e.g., single track mainline, single track with passing sliding, and double track mainline)
 - Train Schedules (e.g., freight trains and proposed passenger trains)

- Signal Control System (e.g., automatic blocks, centralized traffic control, positive train control (PTC))
- Grade Crossings (e.g., average daily vehicle traffic, type of crossing protection)
- Rail Simulation Outputs:
 - Animation of train movements
 - Time-distance diagrams (stringlines)
 - Train performance calculator
 - Track occupancy chart
 - Detailed train status
 - Timetables
 - Operating statistics
- Lower Investment Alternative Times:
 - Eastbound run times:
 - North Adams 0, Greenfield 1 hour 19 minutes, Fitchburg 2 hours 53 minutes, Boston North Station 3 hours 55 minutes
 - Westbound run times:
 - Boston North Station 0, Fitchburg 1 hour, Greenfield 2 hour 35 minutes, North Adams 3 hours 59 minutes
- Higher Investment Alternative Times:
 - Eastbound run times:
 - North Adams 0, Greenfield 47 minutes, Fitchburg 1 hour 50 minutes, Boston North Station 2 hours 48 minutes
 - Westbound run times:
 - Boston North Station 0, Fitchburg 59 hour, Greenfield 2 hours, North Adams 2 hours 58 minutes

A poll is launched to better understand the types of trips attendees would use the train for under the lower investment alternative:



A poll is launched to better understand the types of trips attendees would use the train for under the higher alternative investment:



- Ridership Estimation 101:
 - Understanding potential ridership helps weigh the benefits and costs of a new passenger rail service.
 - These estimations require data and the use of analytic tools to inform the Study team about travel markets.
 - Pairing demographic information with ridership projections enables equity analysis of the impact of the rail project.
- Defining the Overall Travel Market:
 - Travel market analysis for study based on existing travel flows – this can be changed by service and policies.
 - A study analysis is a good approach for feasibility testing, with more detailed approach available as needed.
 - This workshop focuses on a range of estimates because of less available details about impact of change at this early stage.
- Overview of Data Sources:
 - Streetlight Data Location-based Services (LBS) – anonymized location records from smart phones and navigation devices.
 - Streetlight data has one to thirty-five percent sample rate of the total travel market.
 - American Community Survey (ACS) Journey to Work – Census collected information on locations of households and workplaces.
 - Based on five-year average of survey results between 2015-2019.

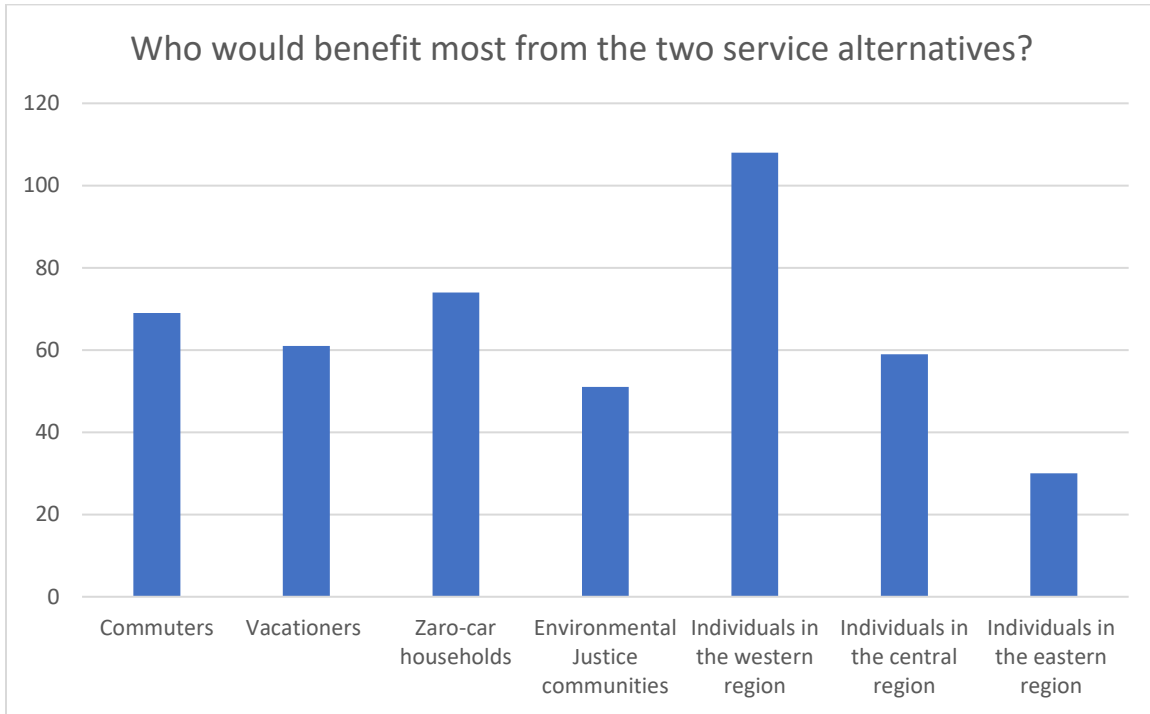
Anna Barry (HNTB) gives an overview of travel in the Northern Tier corridor. The total daily trip origins by corridor segment are as follows: five percent originate in the western segment, twelve percent originate in the central segment, and eighty-three percent originate in the eastern segment. This data is used to estimate the ridership and develop a model. This process includes the following steps:

- Ridership Estimation Process
 - Step One: Develop model to predict ridership based on observed MBTA and Streetlight data.
 - Step Two: Estimate Downeaster travel time elasticities (i.e., each additional minute of travel time reduces boardings by X%).
 - Step Three: Apply MBTA boarding model to estimate corridor boardings by market and number of trains and apply Downeaster travel time elasticities to adjust boardings for longer travel times.

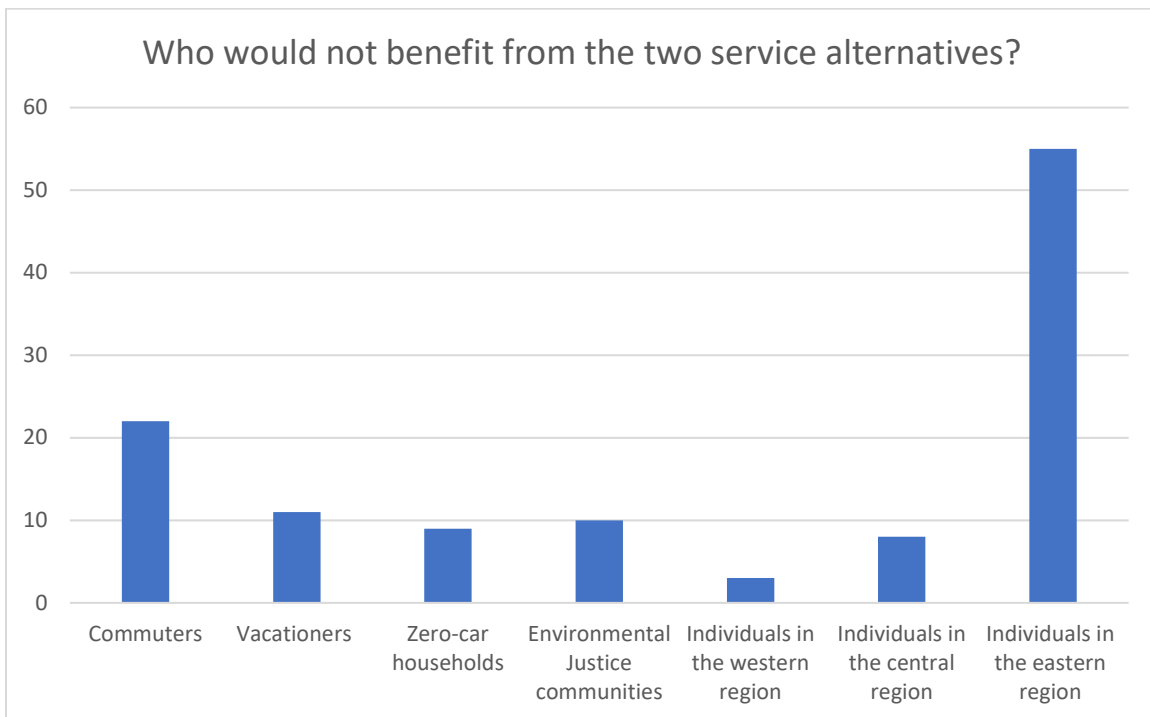
Anna Barry (HNTB) reviews the initial ridership estimation for the lower and higher investment scenario estimates. The main takeaways include the following:

- Baseline travel market decreases with distance along the corridor.
- There may be some increase for TD Garden, Red Sox, and other special events, but increase not as significant as other corridors with shorter trip times and established travel patterns.
- Trip times has a large impact on ridership.
- Changes in population and employment could impact these estimates.

A poll is launched to better understand who the attendees think would benefit the most from the two service alternatives:



A poll is launched to better understand who the attendees think would not benefit from the two service alternatives:

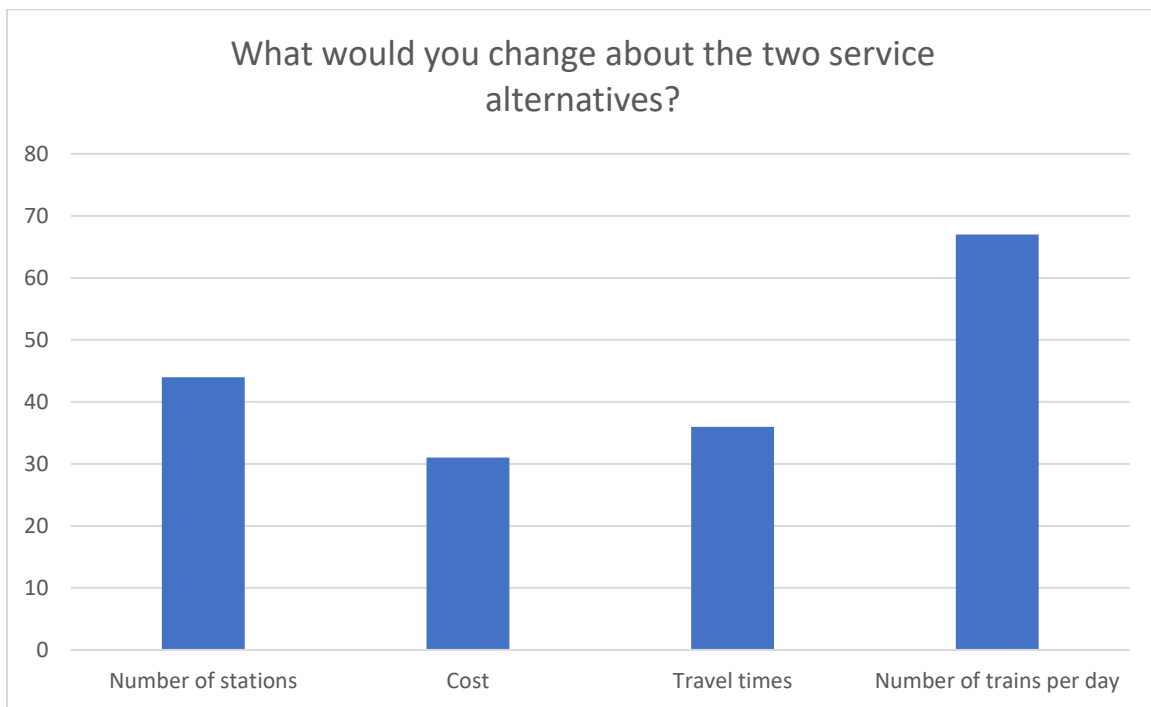


Anna Barry (HNTB) reviews the cost estimation process. Factors such as materials, location, equipment, and labor are considered and depend upon the level of design. The Northern Tier Study is at a pre-design stage. Contingency costs account for unknown but expected elements of the project. The cost estimates are based on material, equipment, and labor costs from recent railroad construction projects in Massachusetts and surrounding states.

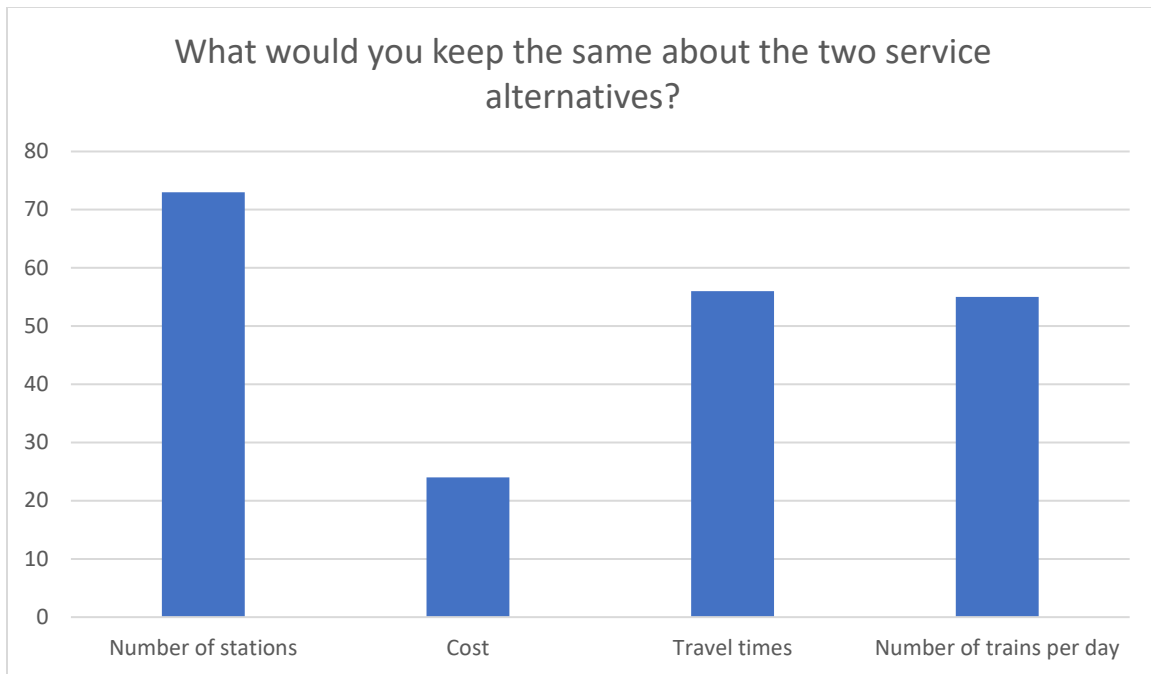
Anna Barry (HNTB) compares the initial cost estimates of the initial lower investment alternative, which is approximately \$1,044,850,000 (total project cost per mile is \$7,358,100), and the initial higher investment alternative, which is approximately \$2,187,350,000 (total project cost per mile is \$15,403,875). The main takeaways include the following:

- Passenger rail needs are different from freight rail needs.
- The introduction of passenger rail service requires significant investment, even for moderate improvements in speeds.
- The extent of rail upgrades is a major differentiator.
- The costs include contingencies at Pre-Feasibility stage.

A poll is launched to better understand what the attendees what change about the two service alternatives:



A poll is launched to better understand what the attendees would keep the same about the two service alternatives:



4. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT and Anna Barry, HNTB*

Greg Vine asks about the meeting materials being made available for review.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the meeting information will be made available on the Study website.

Brendan asks will the evaluations look at that new generation of equipment since Amtrak is buying the Airo trainsets that will supplant Amfleet.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says the Study team can investigate this. The current estimates are based on equipment with characteristics the Study team is familiar with, but this could be considered and evaluated in other alternatives.

John Garrett says he is thrilled to see these options are feasible. He says he used to live in Chicopee, MA and has gone to several meetings in 2014 for studies between Boston and Springfield which did not advance. He also says it is unfortunate since the Commonwealth is seeking these services and these two alternatives have the potential to transform areas like Greenfield into places that can connect with the rest of the Commonwealth. He says he is thrilled to see this Study team working on this with a mandate to make this happen and that Franklin County is one of a few counties that has declined in population, so this could make a difference.

Faith Williams asks why medical appointments were not included as a reason to use the train and says many people in the west travel to Boston for specialist healthcare.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Faith for the question and says the Study team has been garnering input on the reasons people would use this rail service.

Carl McKinney thanks the Study team for their work and asks if reductions in travel times for freight trains have been thought of considering the shortages and supply chain issues and transportations

issues seen in the last few years. He also asks if the Study team has evaluated the potential to reduce population declines.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says the Study team used information on train traffic anticipated by the CSX acquisition for the initial projections, which can change but the Study team is currently using this information. She also says the initial projections are based on ridership travel modeling are based on existing population and projections that developed over several years so other alternatives can be considered based on the trends.

Garrison Taylor asks if the ridership calculations considered the large student population in the western region that might not currently travel at all.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says the Study team used existing population data and existing projections of current travel patterns to develop the initial projections, and as more details on these groups and travel plans and changes emerge, this information will be included in other alternatives.

Tom Bernard says he echoes the comment from John Garrett regarding connectivity in Greenfield and thinks that this should be extended to the Berkshires. He says that while he appreciates the science to the projections and the modeling, there is no model for places west of Fitchburg. He says that the demand is likely substantially higher than projected and notes that it will never be less expensive to complete this project than it is now.

Representative John Barrett says Berkshire and Franklin are the two counties in Massachusetts that have experienced a decline in population. He says the \$2.1 billion costs of this project compared to what has been put into roads and bridges for improving access to Boston from the western part of the state is a small price. The Berkshires could see a migration from the eastern part of the state and southern Vermont could impact the ridership of this service. He says that as far as the Hoosac Tunnel goes, there will be several millions of dollars needed to fix the existing conditions and it might be good to have fewer freight trains going through there. He believes that broadband service and this train service will build the economy over the next 15-20 years in Berkshire County and the higher investment alternative would be the best option.

Christopher Silvia asks if the project plan, travel demand, and schedule account for transfers with Amtrak trains in Greenfield.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says the Study team tried their best to select stopping times at Greenfield to match up with some of the station times of the Valley Flyer and Amtrak. In other alternatives, these connections could be further improved.

Greg Vine says the towns of Athol, Templeton, Winchendon, and Gardner have a population of 50-60,000 people and stations need to be included in Athol and Gardener to increase ridership.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says this will be further discussed as part of module 3.

Barbara Alexander says the Study team left out some information from the existing population trends and that those locked into the Boston housing market would benefit the most from this rail service. Barbara also says that there are many events and attractions, including MASS MoCA, could further attract people west.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says these attractions and other events have been considered.

Ross Jacobs asks if it is feasible to begin service under the lower-cost alternative and make upgrades to continue reducing travel times.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says phasing in transportation improvements is a possibility.

Lynne Kellner asks how a billion-dollar budget for this Study compares to the MassDOT budget.

Anna Barry (HNTB) says comparisons are made to projects in the region and capital cost comparisons are shared for the initial service alternatives, however these are somewhat expensive because the improvements that need to be made, and the ridership numbers are not as high as areas that are densely populated. She says a lot is dependent on the benefits.

Representative Aaron Saunders says the 4.3-mile extension of the Green Line cost over \$2 billion and suggests that this is a modest investment into the Western part of the state and as the other options are considered, these communities should be prioritized. He also says that while there are limitations to models, the housing issues and Green Line extension costs should be considered.

5. Module 2: Evaluation of Phase 1 Alternatives by Paul Nelson, HNTB

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews Study goals which are supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation and the various impacts of the Study. He also lists the possible elements that could be measured, as well as the Study team's evaluation of mobility and access followed by partial lists of attractors in North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, and North Station.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the following:

- Economic Impact: Direct, Indirect, and Induced:
 - Potential benefits to individuals and business:
 - Potential savings by switching to rail travel
 - May provide access to jobs in new regions and cities
 - Could create new jobs
 - May attract new residents to the region, who patronize businesses
 - Potential increase in property values
 - Potential Benefits to Towns and Cities:
 - Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) could lead to new housing, retail, and office space
 - May increase local tax base
 - Could preserve natural resources by reducing pressure for green field development

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the evaluation of the economic impact of the Study. He notes that the estimated transportation costs (auto trip costs and parking costs) for the lower build range from \$1.24 million to \$3.29 million, while the higher build costs range from \$1.92 million to \$5.19 million. To calculate the primary construction impacts, the full project cost estimates for each concept have been fed into REMI econometric model and the economic impacts include information on outputs, income, and employment estimates per year of construction for the lower and higher builds. Examples such as

the Downeaster in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine as well as the Hartford Line are used to convey different economic impacts.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the evaluation of social equity and fairness of the Study, which include access for zero car-households and environmental justice communities. He also explains the evaluation of impacts on rail capacity and the differences between freight operations (the RTC model has calculated an average freight train delay of about ten minutes) and passenger operations (Northern Tier trains are scheduled to run between the intervals of MBTA commuter rail trains and not expected to impact MBTA operations).

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the evaluation of impacts on environmental and cultural resources. Constraints could include wetlands and waterways, FEMA designated floodplains, open space, and recreational parklands. Both alternatives limit improvements to within the existing right-of-way, minimizing potential impacts. He reviews an example of a potential layover site in North Adams to show these potential impacts.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the evaluation of cost effectiveness. The standard for comparison across scenarios is cost per mile (total project costs divided by length of the project) and cost per rider (total project cost divided by total number of riders). Further, the operating and maintenance costs per rider are calculated by annual operating costs divided by total number of riders.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews safety and air quality. The Study team anticipates a reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for each investment alternative.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) compares the Phase 1 alternatives. Similarities include coverage area and populations served, estimated environmental impacts, and estimated passenger rail impacts. Differences include travel time and estimated ridership, the extent of economic impacts, estimated cost effectiveness, estimated freight rail impacts, and estimated VMT reduction.

6. Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), and Paul Nelson, HNTB

Emma Weiskopf says she is a physician and has lived in western Massachusetts for 15 years. She says it is difficult recruiting people who finish their residency in Boston because it is difficult to travel to the western part of the state without using a car. Further, she has accepted a job in Seaport and needs to travel to Wachusett and take the train, so she is interested in seeing this project succeed.

Greg Roach says the major benefits will be seen in future generations as the infrastructure and the users find the actual potential.

Carl McKinney says the project should also think of connecting to Albany, New York and that North Adams is not directly connected to Albany, so this would increase connectivity to other areas of New York.

Mark Shapp asks if the Study team could be more specific as to the proposed station location and layover facilities at North Adams.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says there is an area east along the rails from the historic station that was identified based on previously having railroad-related uses. The Study team is identifying the potential location and any potential environmental impacts, but there is no preferred location or configuration for it at this point of the study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says that at this conceptual level, the Study team is reviewing the facilities needed to have the initial service alternatives developed so far and these will be updated as the Study progresses.

Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier says she agrees with her colleagues' comparisons of this Study's estimated costs and the costs of the Green Line extension. She cautions against the Study teams' metrics of zero-car households, as these metrics do not always apply to western Massachusetts. She mentions that other metrics should also be considered and the ways they are being applied to this project area.

MJ Adams asks if the cost per rider estimates is cost per rider per year.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says the cost would increase with inflation for operating costs and is cost per year. The cost per rider based on the capital costs and this is the estimated year ridership for the total project cost.

Andy Hogeland says the ridership information in Phase 1 only took data from Massachusetts and missed people from Vermont, New Hampshire, or eastern New York. He asks that there is a capture zone that crosses state lines for ridership populations and says people coming west from Boston can visit more places and events that are slightly further than the proposed train stations.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says the list of attractors is not meant to be comprehensive. The Study team will ensure it is clearer how these are being considered and what type of events there are and how they translate into ridership estimations.

7. Module 3: Looking Ahead to Phase 2 by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), and Anna M. Barry, HNTB

Makaela Niles introduces Module 3, which is an opportunity to provide input on service characteristics that could be included in the additional four service alternatives. The characteristics include stations, coverage area, service structure, frequency of service, span of service, travel time between stations, and physical improvements followed by ranges of options for each.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the stations and coverage area:

- Potential Alternative for Phase 2:
 - An alternative that adds station stops at Orange, Gardener, Ayer, and Porter Square
 - An alternative that adds stations stops at Athol, Ayer, and Waltham
- Other Options:
 - Station stops could be included in Williamstown, Charlemont, Shelburne Falls, Miller's Falls, Erving, Baldwinville, North Leominster, and or Littleton Route 495.
 - There is an extension of service to Albany on existing lines via Schenectady.
 - There is an extension of service to Albany on new alignment through Cohoes and Troy.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the service structure, frequency, and span of service. An image is referenced to show potential options related to how the service could be structured, whether it may include direct service, transfers, or a blend of express and local service, and how frequent it could be.

- Potential Alternative for Phase 2:
 - An alternative that eliminates Northern Tier service at Fitchburg, allowing transfers to MBTA Commuter Rail for trips to Boston North Station.
 - An alternative that provides seven daily trains.
- Other Options:
 - Terminates Northern Tier service at an intermediate station between Fitchburg and Boston.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) mentions potential tradeoffs that would need to be considered. For example, direct service may be more desirable and also requires more equipment, or higher frequency can provide more options for travel and also has impacts on cost and potential conflicts with freight and passenger service along the corridor.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the travel time between stations and physical improvements by referencing an image that shows how speeds can be improved as a result. These improvements include new track alignments in key areas or new sidings.

- Potential Alternative for Phase 2:
 - An alternative that electrifies the rail.
 - An alternative that constructs a new alignment between Gardener and Fitchburg.
- Other Options:
 - Double track the whole Northern Tier corridor line.
 - New alignment through Athol and Royalston.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) mentions potential tradeoffs that would need to be considered. For example, more physical improvements can potentially decrease travel time for riders and requires more capital investment.

8. *Public Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager), Anna Barry, HNTB, and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Andy Hogeland says the Study team should investigate stops in Charlemont and Williamstown for seasonal events. These entities record where customers come from, and this information could potentially be made available.

Marcus Graly says there are a lot of people that live in Gardner and Athol with various attractions that could benefit from stops.

Emily Crowley says a service branch from Greenfield to Amherst would be beneficial for students.

Barbara Alexander says reliability is most important.

Carl McKinney says there are rights-of-way of the existing track to Mechanicsville and at the last public meeting, one of the panelists indicated the rights of way were still there to Rensselaer. He also says that there is a segment that goes through southern Vermont and to be inclusive and economically integrated, Bennington and Albany should be brought in. There is an opportunity for Massachusetts to collaborate with other states, especially if there is federal funding available.

Françoise Hatte says it is important that there are fast and frequent trains to make it possible to travel to Boston without needing to drive and park.

Representative John Barrett says the cost of the project should not increase. He thinks one of these two alternatives could potentially lead to the success of this project. He is unsure if a line to Albany exists currently, so it might be useful to prioritize this and notes the Governor and other representatives are invested in this and there are commitments in funding from legislature for Northern Tier.

Sam Seidel likes the idea of stops in Orange and in Porter Square in Cambridge, and the idea of expanding consideration to including Albany, NY and the Amtrak north-south route running through Greenfield.

Nicholas Horton says adding additional stations would be a priority and the potential to connect to Albany is an exciting possibility.

Mark Shapp says the old Boston mainline from Johnsonville down to Troy is gone. The only way to go to Albany Rensselaer Station would be through Mechanicville Yard, out the west end, and on the Amtrak line to Schenectady and back to Albany.

Senator Joanne Comerford says as the Study progresses, she would love to see the Study consider longer-term possible economic or population growth along the northern tier spurred by passenger rail as a stimulus. She also says she understand the economic impact of the direct construction but would love to see something broader over time.

Kristen Elechko (Western Massachusetts Regional Director for Senator Ed Markey) thanks everyone for producing this public workshop. She appreciates being a part of the presentation, the leadership of elected officials, and the public comments and will remain engaged.

Marcus Graly asks that Porter Square be included as a possible station stop and says there is a lot of development in Kendall, and it is much easier to get there on the Red Line from Porter than it is to get there from North Station, increasing the potential ridership.

Will Quale says module 3 addressed his earlier questions in the discussion. He strongly encourages and will advocate for future opportunities for many more stations with frequent short trainsets making connections. He also says Millers Falls would become his local station and that this is a great location.

Senator Joanne Comerford asks what the schedule is for the Study after this workshop.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says as part of the next steps, the two initial alternatives will be refined, and four additional alternatives will be developed based on the feedback received and be assessed using the evaluation criteria. The Study is expected to be completed in the Spring.

Elijah Witkowski-Despres agrees with the addition of a Porter Square stop.

Lynne Kellner asks how much has been forecasted for federal input for federal funding towards this project.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) says the two alternatives will be refined and four other alternatives will be developed and assessed based on the evaluation criteria. The draft final report will be released for public comment before it is finalized and will include possible funding opportunities.

9. *Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the next steps for the Study goals and objectives. She mentions the two alternatives will be refined and four other alternatives will be developed and assessed based on the evaluation criteria. The draft final report will be released for public comment for a month before it is finalized. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks members of the public for attending and sharing their comments and questions and encourages attendees to visit the Study website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for Study updates and monthly e-newsletter. The materials from this meeting including the video recording and meeting summary, will be made available on the Study website.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Workshop

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- John Orrison – HNTB
- Karl Clayter - HNTB
- Paige Sopher – HNTB
- Sara Stoja – HNTB
- Andreas Aepli – Cambridge Systematics
- Dan Tempesta – Cambridge Systematics

Interpreters:

- Kym Detato – American Sign Language
- John Roberts – American Sign Language
- Megan Speed – CART

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Aaron Saunders – MA State Representative | 25. Brian Winchendon |
| 2. Adrienne Nunez | 26. Bridget Sullivan |
| 3. Alan Butler | 27. Brigham Stevenson |
| 4. Alex Herchenreder | 28. Brooke Burrows |
| 5. Alex Wang | 29. Bruce Fogwell |
| 6. Alice Bojanowski | 30. Bryan Smith |
| 7. Alice Goldfarb | 31. Caitlin von Schmidt |
| 8. Alicia Canary | 32. Cameron Dunbar |
| 9. Allen Pope | 33. Carl McKinney |
| 10. Allison Fippingier | 34. Carolyn Sellars |
| 11. Andrew Achenbach | 35. Carter Jimmis |
| 12. Andrew Fitch | 36. Cathy Kristofferson |
| 13. Andy Hogeland | 37. Christopher Silvia |
| 14. Anne McKinnon | 38. Clark Semon |
| 15. Barbara Alexander | 39. Claudia Palframan |
| 16. Bee Jacque | 40. Clete Kus |
| 17. Bella Levavi | 41. Clint Richmond |
| 18. Ben Heckscher | 42. Constance Peters |
| 19. Ben Svenson | 43. Dallas Ducar |
| 20. Bill Dacey | 44. Dana Roscoe |
| 21. Bob Armstrong | 45. Daniel Bigda |
| 22. Brad Harris | 46. Daniel Raine |
| 23. Brendan Read | 47. David Brock |
| 24. Brian Parkinson | 48. David Cohen |

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| 49. David Kulp | 94. John Hostage |
| 50. David Nixon | 95. John Kyper |
| 51. Dee Brochu | 96. Jojo Finfer |
| 52. Dianne Olsen | 97. Joseph Arabia |
| 53. Drew David | 98. Joseph Barr |
| 54. Edward Bates | 99. Joseph DiMarino |
| 55. Edward Damon Jr | 100. Judith Atkins |
| 56. Elijah Witkowski-Despres | 101. Judy Waters |
| 57. Elizabeth Giannini | 102. Julian Hartmann-Russell |
| 58. Elizabeth Murphy | 103. K K |
| 59. Emily Bayard | 104. Katerina King |
| 60. Emily Crowley | 105. Kevin Kump |
| 61. Emily Hodos | 106. Kevin Sullivan |
| 62. Emma Weiskopf | 107. Kim Shand |
| 63. Eric Kerns | 108. Kristen Elechko - Western Massachusetts
Regional Director for Senator Ed Markey |
| 64. Faith Williams | 109. Kristofer Munroe |
| 65. Françoise Hatte | 110. Laura Hanson |
| 66. Garrett Postema | 111. Leo Quigley |
| 67. Garrison Taylor | 112. Linda Dunlavy |
| 68. Gary Bartholomaus | 113. Linda Maloney |
| 69. George Kahale | 114. Lisa Blackmer |
| 70. George Waldmann | 115. Lisa Gustavsen |
| 71. Greg Roach | 116. Lucia Folet |
| 72. Greg Vine | 117. Lynn Valle |
| 73. Gregory Cox | 118. Lynne Kellner |
| 74. Gretchen Heinle | 119. Malcolm Ragan |
| 75. Hannah Holleman | 120. Marcel LaFlamme |
| 76. Heather Williams | 121. Marcus Graly |
| 77. Hope Nilsson | 122. Mariah Kurtz |
| 78. J. B. Mack | 123. Marie Harpin |
| 79. Jacquelyn Goddard | 124. Mark Shapp |
| 80. James Garzon | 125. Marta Nover |
| 81. James Sheehan | 126. Mary Holtorf |
| 82. Jay Flynn | 127. Mary Savarese |
| 83. Jeannette Smith | 128. Mary Westervelt |
| 84. Jennifer Bernard | 129. Matt Lord |
| 85. Jennifer West | 130. Matthew Cooperman |
| 86. Jill Behringer | 131. Matthew Minihan |
| 87. Joanne Comerford – MA State Senator | 132. Matthew Spurlock |
| 88. Joe Kurland | 133. Meredith Slesinger |
| 89. Joe Zissman | 134. Michael Arnold |
| 90. John Barrett – MA State Representative | 135. Michael Eriquezzo |
| 91. John Cronin – MA State Senator | 136. Michele Spring-Moore |
| 92. John Edwards | 137. Mindy Domb – MA State Representative |
| 93. John Garrett | |

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| 138. MJ Adams | 182. Zachary O'Brien |
| 139. Avie Kalker | |
| 140. Nancy Hazard | |
| 141. Natalie Blais – MA State Representative | |
| 142. Nicholas Horton | |
| 143. Nick Licata | |
| 144. Nicole Fonsh | |
| 145. Nolan Buonomano | |
| 146. Patricia Gerry-Karajanes | |
| 147. Pete Cooke | |
| 148. Peter Lowitt | |
| 149. Ralph Brill | |
| 150. Rana Al-Jammal | |
| 151. Rauley Caine | |
| 152. Rich Remsberg | |
| 153. Robert Malnati | |
| 154. Robin Brickman | |
| 155. Ron Hult | |
| 156. Ross Jacobs | |
| 157. Roy Nascimento | |
| 158. Sam Seidel | |
| 159. Sandra Thomas | |
| 160. Sarah Reynolds | |
| 161. Sarah Robertson | |
| 162. Sarah Vallieres | |
| 163. Scott Galbraith | |
| 164. Scott Stafford | |
| 165. Shaw Izikson | |
| 166. Sheera Hefter | |
| 167. Sophie Michaux | |
| 168. Susan Templeton | |
| 169. Tammy Daniels | |
| 170. Thomas Gelb | |
| 171. Thomas Matuszko | |
| 172. Timothy Dolan | |
| 173. Tom Bernard | |
| 174. Travis Condon | |
| 175. Trevor Beauregard | |
| 176. Tricia Farley-Bouvier – MA State Representative | |
| 177. Wes Coates | |
| 178. Wil Neeley | |
| 179. Will Quale | |
| 180. William Dwyer | |
| 181. William Keller | |



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group Meeting #3
Thursday, October 19, 2023, 1:00 PM
Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group workshop met for the third time on October 19, 2023. At this meeting, the Study team shared an overview of the study's background, reviewed the public workshop, presented the development and evaluation of the Phase 2 alternatives, and garnered feedback.

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome, Ground Rules, and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself, thanks all participants, and explains the meeting notes and procedures including how to participate. She reviews the agenda for the meeting.

2. Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study overview and process, which includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory, and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

The Study team presents the goals and objectives for the Study, which are to:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity
- Minimize the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

3. Public Workshop Review by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the two-phase alternatives development process. Phase 1 includes two initial alternatives: a lower investment option and a higher investment option, each with a one-seat ride from North Adams to Boston North Station, four stations, and five trains per day. The initial alternatives assume the accommodation of commuter schedules and freight trains, diesel trains with Amtrak-type equipment, and no modification or investment in MBTA infrastructure. The level of investment was the main differentiator between the two alternatives, as the higher investment includes more track infrastructure improvements.

An evaluation of the two initial alternatives found that the higher investment level allowed for travel time reduction of more than one hour both eastbound and westbound compared to the lower investment level. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains the relationship between ridership, cost, travel time, and associated economic and environmental benefits and impacts.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the feedback received during and following the public workshop which helped inform the development of the Phase 2 Alternatives.

The Study team was asked to:

- Consider additional stops
- Evaluate a connection to Albany
- Consider seasonal attractors
- Consider potential upgrades to support higher speeds

Comments and questions related to ridership projections and cost estimation were also received.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that the initial ridership estimation process for the Phase 1 evaluation was a three-step process based on StreetLight Data origin-destination trips, which were applied to observed MBTA Commuter Rail boardings. Then, using a travel time comparison to account for the trip distance, the ridership was estimated. He then reviews the updated, four-step ridership estimation process including the incorporation of travel time by rail compared to driving. Daily trip origins by corridor segment from 2019 StreetLight Data are presented and catchment areas around stations are also described as a factor in estimating ridership.

The cost estimation process is reviewed. Cost categories include construction cost, acquisition of real estate for the right of way, a civil system contingency at 0% design, vehicle or train costs, escalation for future costs, and engineering and permitting.

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is at a pre-design stage, therefore contingency costs account for unknown but expected elements of the project. The cost estimates are based on material, equipment, and labor costs from recent railroad construction projects in Massachusetts and surrounding states. The Study team refined the cost of track components, incorporated a credit for recycled rail and materials, and updated the rolling stock estimates. Station estimates reflect station accessibility features.

4. *Phase 2 Alternatives Development and Evaluation by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that, based on input, four additional service alternatives were developed as part of Phase 2. Each is built upon the higher level of investment from the Phase 1 alternatives.

- Alternative 3 – Electrified Service – Includes an overhead catenary system and associated rolling stock. The cost of electrifying the rail service is discussed. A new double track in Charlemont is required for freight service to continue. Tracks are to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Electrification is overhead. Crossings need upgrades. Some bridge rehabilitation is necessary. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control are proposed improvements. Stations at Athol, Ayer, and Porter Square, Cambridge are added. A layover facility in North Adams is also proposed.
- Alternative 4 – Full Local Service – The cost of full local service to include more stations in Shelburne Falls, Athol, Gardner and Porter Square, Cambridge is discussed. New double track is proposed in Buckland. Tracks are proposed to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Upgrades to crossings and bridge rehabilitation are also proposed. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control is anticipated. A layover facility in North Adams is also proposed.
- Alternative 5 – Albany Extension – From North Adams, service is extended to Schenectady and Albany. Double track is proposed in Charlemont, Stillwater, NY and Clifton Park, NY. Additional improvements proposed include grade crossing upgrades, bridge rehabilitation, signal replacement and Positive Train Control implementation. North Adams layover is not included, as facilities in Albany are assumed to be utilized.
- Alternative 6 – Northern Tier Rail Link – Includes a connection in Fitchburg from the MBTA Commute Rail to Northern Rail Tier train service. Station stops added include Athol. Tracks are to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Crossing need upgrades. Some bridge rehabilitation is necessary. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control are implemented. North Adams is proposed to have a layover.

Total Project Cost per Route Mile is discussed for Alternatives 1 through 6. Project construction costs for the Hartford Line and South Coast Rail are presented for comparison purposes.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that ridership is related to travel time and a reduction in travel time increases ridership. Alternative 3 (Electrified Service) and Alternative 4 (Full Local Service) generate the highest ridership.

5. *Working Group Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) summarizes the proposed alternatives and asks for questions and comments from the Working Group. She reviews the protocol for asking questions and/or leaving comments.

Senator Jo Comerford thanks the Study team for the presentation. She also expresses excitement about the local stops and appreciation for the combination of climate readiness. She mentions the public meeting being held the following week and the importance of building public awareness.

Representative John Barrett requests information on the cost of the North Adams loading station.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) replies by estimating \$5 million to \$6 million, which developing level boarding for accessibility. Anna Barry notes that the highest cost alternative that includes electrification is approximately \$3 billion, and the lower cost alternative is approximately \$1.5 billion.

Robert Malnati requests clarification of the ridership estimates presented.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that the ridership numbers presented accounted for the range of ridership estimated for the six alternatives studied. Alternatives 3 and 4 are represented by the higher end of the ridership estimate. The lower ridership estimate represents Alternative 6, which also has the longest travel time.

Robert Malnati asks about whether the Lake Shore Limited service was taken into consideration.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that ridership for the Lake Shore Limited was also studied and mentions that the Downeaster ridership was studied for comparison for travel beyond the metropolitan Boston area to identify potential ridership in places like Greenfield and intermediate stations like Athol.

Linda Dunlavy requests that the ridership in the presentation be clarified before the public meeting.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) says that the range can be provided to help people understand how the numbers relate to each other.

Representative Natalie Blais thanks the Study team for the analysis and asks about whether the cost estimates were based on contracting out to a private entity or based on using the railroad to do the work.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that cost estimates were based on recent rail construction projects and that often the railroad will use its own forces if they have them.

Representative Natalie Blais asks about the rolling stock included in the cost estimates, including who would own the rolling stock, would it include purchasing new vehicles, and how those cost estimates were developed around vehicles.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says the cost estimates include the capital cost of purchasing equipment and that the assumption is that Amtrak would be the operator. She notes that the Commonwealth, as the sponsor of the service, would be responsible for the various capital costs and mentions that, in order to look at the true capital cost of the project, it was treated as if the Commonwealth was buying the equipment.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) states that the cost is based on the current Amtrak procurement for corridor trains.

Representative Natalie Blais inquires about whether the assumption is that this would be an intercity rail service.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) says that intercity rolling stock would be used, as opposed to commuter equipment, and Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the service is to be considered intercity rail.

Representative Natalie Blais asks about whether the cost estimates included the full construction of high-level platforms and whether these could be phased.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that the Study includes the cost of full, high-level platforms and assumed a retractable platform edge in order to include the full cost of accessibility, while recognizing that phasing is possible.

Representative Natalie Blais says it might be helpful to understand the cost of mini high platforms would be and inquires about assumptions on electrification east of Fitchburg. Representative Natalie Blais also asks about an estimated timeline for Northern Tier.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that a construction estimate was used and the impact funding has on the timeline. She also explains that electrification is a big endeavor and that the Study assumes that the service east of Fitchburg is electrified, as the Study did not want to burden the Northern Tier project with the cost of electrifying east of Fitchburg. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) mentions that electrification could take place in phases and that dual mode rolling stock could potentially be utilized.

Representative Natalie Blais asks about the proposed track reconfiguration west of Shelburne Falls.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that double track allows for freight and passenger trains to pass each other and that, because the railroad is largely single track now, additional track needs to be provided for the trains to pass each other and to accommodate the schedule.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) adds that it is assumed that double track could be added within the existing right-of-way.

Representative Natalie Blais asks about the number of freight trains currently operating along the corridor.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that approximately 40 trains per week and Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) adds that volumes between Fitchburg and Greenfield differ from volumes west of Greenfield.

Representative Natalie Blais suggests that ridership projections be included on the Alternative slides and asks if the study has considered a mix of straight-through westbound trips and some that connect to the MBTA Fitchburg Line.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that the Study has not considered that alternative.

Representative Natalie Blais requests more information on induced economic development.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that estimated job creation and value added from the capital construction costs and mentions that the benefit-cost analysis will include other economic benefits such as increased real estate values. He also explains the relationship between capital costs, community benefits, and job creation.

Senator Jo Comerford asks what relationship Keolis would have with the Northern Tier Rail service east of Fitchburg.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) says that service alternatives were developed to avoid impacting the MBTA Commuter Rail trains operated by Keolis.

Senator Jo Comerford mentions the benefit of connecting to trains in the east and suggests that for the public meeting, information on rough timelines of implementation, climate, and economic impacts for all of Massachusetts could be useful to present. Senator Jo Comerford asks about public outreach strategies for the public meeting that could be used and shared.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that the next task of the study will address implementation, funding opportunities, and timelines. She also asks for participants to share the information on the website with the public and states that all are invited to attend the public meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM. She shares that registration information and a flyer are available, as well as social media posting.

Representative John Barrett inquires about when the meeting materials may be available for viewing.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) that the presentation will be posted to the study website once it is made accessible and is anticipated to be posted in advance of the public meeting.

Representative Natalie Blais asks if the presentation will be sent to the Working Group.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) confirms and says that the process will be expedited to allow enough time for review of the materials in advance of the public meeting.

6. Public Comment by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the discussion up to members of the public in attendance for public comment and reminds the public that additional questions and comments can be shared on the study website.

Barbara Alexander asks if the alternatives could be ranked and presented from the simplest and cheapest alternative to be implemented and built to the most complex and expensive alternative. She asks about the timeline and feels the public would also be well served to know the timeline of implementation of the alternatives.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that the next steps implementation and timeline will be discussed in the next task. She reads comments from Shaun and Eric related to the inclusion of Athol as a proposed stop.

Richard Rudolf would like to know and feels the public needs to know the timeline. He states that Alternative 6 with a stop in Fitchburg with an expectation for riders to then use MBTA service is inconvenient and will take more time.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) recognizes Richard's comment and agrees that the need for a connection reduces the estimated ridership for Alternative 6, but that in a planning study an array of alternatives are examined.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Fay who asks about travel times from Athol to North Station and whether people who live in Athol may be willing to commute to a Greenfield station if there is no station in Athol.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) discusses testing the impact of stations on ridership, and explains that mobility benefits increase as stations increase.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Fay related to ridership equity for students and individuals dependent on public transportation from a financial perspective.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Trevor who asks what is meant by full local service.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds by explaining the full local service features the highest number of stations along the corridor and includes North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, and Fitchburg.

Linda Dunlavy asks if the ridership and cost methodologies changed when re-evaluating Alternative 1 and 2.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that the cost of equipment changed, and ridership increased.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Paula who expresses gratitude for the work on the project and an interest in the potential for phasing.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that this will be included as part of the next steps of the Study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Jared about considering additional ridership from transfers for north and south lines as a source of ridership.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that the model doesn't count on transfers by rail outside of the catchment areas. Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) states that other markets were not studied, including the New York market.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Artie that existing track and rail lines should be used and favors Alternative 5 and electrification for its effect on climate change. She also reads a question from Barbara who asks about whether the unreliability of the Lake Shore Limited schedule is reflected in the ridership estimates.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) says that it was not taken into account from an analysis standpoint.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Leo who asks how seasonal draws were reflected in the analysis.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that ridership was analyzed based on annual data and mentions that seasonal draws add peaks and valleys to the ridership.

7. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks the Working Group and members of the public for attending and sharing comments and questions and encourages attendees to visit the website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for updates. The materials from this meeting will be made available on the Study website.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Meeting #3 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- Sara Stoja – HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics
- Julie Callahan – City Point Partners

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Liz Quigley – Office of Congressman Richard Neal
2. Jo Comerford – State Senator
3. Natalie Blais – State Representative
4. John Barrett – State Representative
5. Bruno Fisher – Montachusett Regional Transit Authority
6. Glenn Eaton – Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
7. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
8. Marco Turra – CSX Transportation
9. Robert Malnati – Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
10. Thomas Matuszko – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
11. Roy Nascimento - North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Amy Cahillane | 19. Jared Cowing |
| 2. Ana Devlin Gauthier | 20. Jessye Deane |
| 3. Andy Hogeland | 21. Juno Pelczar |
| 4. Antoinette Cariddi | 22. Kali Puppolo |
| 5. Artie Carpenter | 23. Kate Richardson |
| 6. Barbara Alexander | 24. Kiara White |
| 7. Ben Heckscher | 25. Leo Quigley |
| 8. Beth Giannini | 26. Mallory Sullivan |
| 9. Brad Harris | 27. Mariah Kurtz |
| 10. Brian Parkinson | 28. Mark Anders |
| 11. Charlotte Minsky | 29. Paula Consolini |
| 12. Chris Klem, MassDOT | 30. Richard Rudolph |
| 13. Clete Kus | 31. Shaun Suhoski |
| 14. Dawn Nims | 32. Soren Henry |
| 15. Donna Riggs | 33. Susan Templeton |
| 16. Eric Smith | 34. Travis Condon |
| 17. Fay Hsieh-Lewis | 35. Trevor Beauregard |
| 18. George Kahale | 36. Walker Powell |



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #2

Thursday, October 26, 2023, 6:00 PM

Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a Public Information Meeting on October 26, 2023. At this meeting, the Study team shared an overview of the study's background, reviewed the public workshop, presented the development and evaluation of the Phase 2 alternatives, and garnered feedback.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules, and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the meeting and informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself, thanks the public and the members of the working group in attendance and explains the meeting notes and procedures including how to participate. She reviews the agenda for the Public Information meeting, which includes an overview of the study, public workshop review, Phase 2 alternative development and evaluation working group discussion, public comment and participation, and finally next steps.

2. *Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reviews the Study background and process, which includes the following with each task building on the previous:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study goals and objectives as supporting economic development along the Northern Tier Corridor, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing the impacts from transportation on public health and the environment.

3. *Public Workshop Review by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the two-phase alternatives development process presented in January of 2023 and states that the public feedback on the initial alternatives led to the development of the Phase 2 Alternatives. Phase 1 includes a lower investment option and a higher investment option for a one-seat-ride from North Adams to Boston North Station, with the following assumptions: four stations, five trains per day, the right of way will be used by both commuter trains and freight trains, dwell time at stations will be two minutes per Amtrak's scheduling standard, train locomotives will be diesel with Amfleet passenger cars, and no modifications will be made to MBTA infrastructure.

The lower investment option included minimum signal improvements and some trackage additions to support meet-and-pass locations. The higher investment option includes more track and signal infrastructure improvements.

Based on an evaluation of the two levels of investment, the higher investment allows for travel time reduction of more than one hour. The lower investment provided a four-hour travel time while the higher investment resulted in just under a three-hour travel time. Higher ridership is a function of reduced travel times. While higher investment creates more transportation costs per rider, lower annual operating costs are realized due to higher ridership. The higher investment also resulted in greater positive environmental impact with a greater vehicle miles travel reduction.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the feedback from the public workshop that led to the Phase 2 alternatives.

The study considered:

- Additional stops
- A connection to Albany
- Seasonal attractors
- Potential upgrades to support higher speeds
- Ridership projections and cost estimation questions

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the initial ridership estimated process and how it changed for Phase 2 of the study. He explains that the initial ridership estimation process for the Phase 1 evaluation was a three-step process that started with a comparison between observed MBTA Commuter Rail boardings and origin-destination trip data along the Northern Tier corridor. The ridership estimates then looked at the impact of travel times on ridership for similar intercity service. These estimates are then used to estimate the potential ridership of the initial service alternatives.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains the updated, four-step ridership estimation process used for Phase 2, which uses a comparison of transit travel time to the auto travel time between the same

destinations. The estimation model was also adjusted to reflect the less frequent intercity service. Recent travel patterns for intra-Corridor trips on the Downeaster are also applied to estimate intra-corridor, non-Boston-based travel along the Northern Tier. He reviews the trip activity data for the corridor. Catchment areas around potential stations are also described as a factor in estimating ridership.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) reviews the cost estimation process. Cost categories include construction cost, acquisition of real estate for the right of way, a civil system contingency at 0% design, vehicle or train costs, escalation for future costs, and engineering and permitting.

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is at a pre-design stage and, as a result, contingency costs account for unknown but expected elements of the project. The cost estimates are based on material, equipment, and labor costs from recent railroad construction projects in Massachusetts and surrounding states. Refinements were made to the cost of track components, the consideration of recycled rail and materials, and rolling stock estimates. Station estimates reflect station accessibility features.

4. Phase 2 Alternatives Development and Evaluation by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) presents the Phase 2 service alternatives that were developed based on input received on the two initial alternatives. All four proposed alternatives in Phase 2 build upon the improvements incorporated into the higher infrastructure investment alternative presented in Phase 1.

Alternative 3 – Electrified Service. Overhead catenary system with electrified rolling stock. A new double track in Charlemont is included. Tracks are to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Electrification is overhead. Crossings need upgrades. Some bridge rehabilitation is necessary. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control are proposed. Station stops are added in Athol, Ayer and Porter Square, Cambridge. North Adams is proposed to have a layover facility.

Alternative 4 – Full Local Service. Full local service proposes to include additional station stops in Shelburne Falls, Athol, Gardner, and Porter Square. New double track is needed in Buckland. Tracks are to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Crossings need upgrades. Some Bridge rehabilitation is necessary. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control are proposed. North Adams is proposed to have a layover.

Alternative 5 – Albany Extension. From North Adams, service is extended through Schenectady and Albany. Other stations include Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter Square, and North Station. Double track is required in Charlemont, and Stillwater and Clifton Park NY. Additional improvements include grade crossing upgrades, bridge rehabilitation, signal replacement, and Positive Train Control implementation. North Adams layover is not included, as facilities in Albany are assumed to be utilized.

Alternative 6 – Northern Tier Rail Link. This alternative includes a connection in Fitchburg from the MBTA Fitchburg Line to the Northern Tier Rail service. Stations include North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, and Fitchburg. Tracks are to be upgraded from Class 3 to Class 4. Crossings need upgrades. Some bridge rehabilitation is necessary. Signal replacement and Positive Train Control are proposed. North Adams is proposed to have a layover.

Total Projected Costs per Route Mile are discussed for Alternatives 1 through 6. Additional project construction costs for the Hartford Line and South Coast Rail are presented for comparison purposes.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) notes that ridership is related to travel time, as a reduction in travel time increases ridership. Travel time for Alternatives 3 through 6 shows a reduction of about one hour between North Adams and Boston compared to Alternative 1. Environmental impacts and passenger rail impacts are estimated to be minimal. Freight rail impacts are assumed to be minimal except for the unknown impacts of Alternative 5 – Albany Extension. Sixty-nine rail crossings are assumed to be impacted for all alternatives except for the Albany Extension which has 119 crossings due to the increased route mileage.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) presents the ridership estimation for the alternatives. Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and Alternative 4 – Full Local Service have the greatest effect on ridership. Alternative 6 – Northern Tier Rail Link has a built-in delay due to the transfer to MBTA Commuter Rail service. Alternative 5 – Albany Extension is in competition with other existing services in New York.

Operation and maintenance costs are higher for the electrified service; however, the ridership is the highest of the alternatives. Transportation cost savings accrue due to lower vehicle use and a decrease in parking fees paid in metro Boston. The economic impacts during construction assume Alternatives 2 through 6 are very similar and would transpire over four years while Alternative 1 assumes only three years of construction.

Economic impacts from construction include direct construction costs, indirect construction costs from vendors, and induced costs defined as the spending that occurs due to increased economic activity in the area.

The comparison to other services includes the Pere Marquette in Illinois/Indiana/Michigan, the Piedmont in North Carolina, the Downeaster in Massachusetts/New Hampshire/Maine and the Vermonter.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that the key takeaways are that all alternatives can provide connectivity, mobility, and transportation choice, and are estimated to provide positive environmental and economic benefits. Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and Alternative 4 – Full Local Service generate higher ridership levels and the measurements associated with them, including transportation costs savings and VMT (vehicle miles traveled) reduction.

5. *Public Comment by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the floor for questions and comments from the public as well as suggestions for next steps. She reviews the protocol for asking questions and/or sharing comments.

Representative Natalie Blais thanks the team for the comprehensive presentation that incorporated many of the questions and suggestions presented throughout the study process, and notes the excitement in Western Massachusetts for rail.

Senator Jo Comerford echoes Representative Blais' comments, inquires about outlining the next steps to study for the meeting participants and how to they can be most engaged, and asks how many people are in attendance or registered for the meeting.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) notes that the meeting has 143 active attendees and explains that, based on the feedback received, the alternatives will be refined and recommended next steps for the study process will be developed.

Andy Hogeland requests additional information about long-term economic development.

Representative John Barrett echoes the comments made by Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Blais and expresses that the time has come to get an implementation program going.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Clint Richmond who asks, what is superelevation?

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) explains that superelevation is elevating the outside rail to account for the impacts of higher speeds and improve passenger comfort through curved locations.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) mentions that the rail service will pass through curved zones in central and western Massachusetts.

Rebecca Bialecki asked to clarify Athol's inclusion as a potential stop and states that it is one of the few communities that has seen population growth in the last two years, and would like that to continue. Rebecca mentions that new housing development coming and that the rail service would be important an asset to help continue the momentum.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) comments that Athol has been included in at least a couple of the proposed alternatives.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) expresses thanks for highlighting the connection between economic development, transportation, and housing, and reads a question from Mike Small, who asks about the population growth projected for Greenfield, if there will be a policy to encourage dense affordable housing to encourage walking and discourage sprawl or building in existing woodland and, failing the existence of policy for affordable housing, if there will be any plan to prevent spikes in rents.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) expresses thanks for highlighting the connection between transportation and housing and adds that as any actions move forward, coordination with municipalities would be needed.

Andrew Fitch inquires about what else residents could do to support Northern Tier Passenger Rail.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) notes that the public meeting attendance, together with the comments and questions received throughout the process has helped to shape the process. She expresses appreciation for the comments, questions, and participation throughout the process and mentions that continuing that momentum with comments, questions, participation, and reaching out to elected officials.

Sean Suhoski states that Athol is the hub of the North Quabbin region of the Commonwealth and points out that it is the second most populous stop between Gardner and Greenfield, with twelve thousand residents like North Adams. Sean mentions the access to the rail for economic development purposes whether for commuting or to increase job opportunities, and for access and quality of life, and expresses his excitement for the study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads two questions from Glenn Eaton regarding additional parking in Gardner, Athol, Greenfield, and North Adams: Have land acquisition costs for additional parking and/or costs relating to constructing additional parking lots or garages been included in the cost estimates, and have sites been identified in the study's analysis or will those sites be identified by the time the final plan is complete?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the study generally identified potential locations for parking around most stations; however, parking lots or garages are not specifically included in the cost estimate. The study has focused on the station construction cost.

Janice Sorensen expresses interest in the local option and asks about what the cost of a ticket would be.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that fare policy is usually developed further along in the development of a transportation service and was not the focus of this study at this stage of planning.

John Garrett echoes previous comments, expresses interest in Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and Alternative 4 – Full Local Service, and supports building the service quickly. He discusses the cost of electrification and the impact on meeting climate goals, and asks about the study's cost per mile, compared with various international and national rail projects.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the study's estimates were developed using the best information available by experts in this type of work who drew upon their experience, and notes that as the project is refined, prices can also be refined.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) adds that this question arises a lot with rail, and transit projects in general. He mentions a report that was completed on why it is cheaper to do transit in other countries and notes the standard of practice for these types of efforts. He notes differing standards for substation construction and other elements.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Clint Richmond who asks if the catchment for a station is larger for intercity travel compared to commuter rail.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) states that catchment areas could be considered larger for intercity service and that this was taken into consideration along the corridor. He mentions the relationship between how far away someone is from the service and the trip time to connect to the service, and the of the East-West rail project on passenger decision-making.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) notes that in developing and modeling travel schedules, connections to North-South service was considered.

Pam Harty thanks the team for including a stop in Athol, advocates for electrification, and wants to ensure there is an understanding of what the costs are. Pam is also interested in understanding the impact on the environmental justice communities if diesel trains are used.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) notes the benefits of electrification and adds that the other alternatives, even with diesel, show reductions in VMT. She mentions the study considers five trains per day and the impact of additional trips would be evaluated in a future phase of permitting.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states the emissions from vehicles taken off the road are generally higher than the emissions released from the trains that would be running. He mentions the consideration of the impacts of idling or diesel emissions.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) adds that there's variation in the types of emissions based on the rolling stock utilized.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads questions from Susan Abrams, Ferd Wulkan, and Clint Richmond related to combining alternatives (e.g., the potential to combine Alternative 3 and Alternative 6), any impacts that combining alternatives may have on costs and the environment, and potential phasing.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that the team evaluated six alternatives for the purpose of showing the impacts and characteristics of the alternatives, and states that phasing is part of the next steps of implementation for policy makers and communities to weigh in on as the project progresses. She notes that Alternative 6 has the longest trip time and combining it with Alternative 3 would lose the benefit of the speeds.

Steven Ellis notes the benefits of the service to provide equitable access to economic, medical, and cultural resources in the eastern part of the state and mentions that, by building a service that attracts riders and is ecologically sound, the greatest economic and quality of life value from the project over time can be yielded. Steven expresses interest in more stops and mentions that the transfer in Fitchburg included in Alternative 6 could undermine the success of the system.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads comments from Jim Mahon and Soren Henry supporting Alternative 4 – Full Local Service.

Lisa Blackmer requests that train schedules and fare cost be analyzed as economic drivers, for example as development of employment opportunities and tourism.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that modeled schedules were developed to serve a variety of needs, and that feedback from this meeting can be incorporated in the next steps.

Ferd Wulkan favors Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and asks if federal funding is available.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that there are federal funds for intercity rail projects.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) adds that federal legislation designates federal funding for intercity rail service and notes that each project is reviewed for economic efficacy.

Brianna Drohen states that she represents a nonprofit in North Quabbin area that works with young adults and mentions that transportation is a challenge for them. She expresses interest in the station in Athol and asks if the study included planned construction projects when looking at long-term economic development improvements for the area. She notes that local large housing projects and business incubators are being built.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that population factored into the alternatives.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that benefit cost ratios will be looked at as part of the next phase of the study and that it includes a prescriptive way to measure things. He notes that one of the benefits considered is the increase in real estate value around stations.

Simon Kent expresses interest in Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and mentions that, in terms of economic savings, including other local stations is also great.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Taylor Guss who asks if Alternative 3 – Electrified Service and Alternative 4 – Full Local Service have been considered together.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains that elements could be added to the alternatives as they move forward.

Marcus Bean expressed concerns about reliability, the number of trips, and costs.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the projected schedules determined the infrastructure that would provide a reliable service and mentions operations and maintenance.

Tom Bernard advocates for the project to move forward for the economic, environmental, and equity benefits the rail service is expected to bring.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads questions from Dawn Nelson, Elaine Sednek, and Emily Crowley regarding connecting to other transit services outside of the Northern Tier, how easily people will be able to move around Boston by public transportation from this service, ridership potential from UMass, and connections from the PVRTA or FRTA to the Greenfield station.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains the direct MBTA connections to the Red Line at Porter Square and to the Green Line, Orange Line, and commuter rail services at North Station. She mentions the need for support from communities and various stakeholders.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) shares that most of the station locations that were examined are at or near existing RTA hubs and services could potentially be coordinated to make connections.

Susan Abrams expresses excitement about the electrified option and expresses that the Northern Berkshires are particularly isolated and hard to reach for people who don't have cars.

She mentions that maintaining a fast connection would make the service effective and asks about the impact of additional stops on speed and whether there is a possibility for a combination of some local service with some limited service.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) shares that combining alternatives is possible. She notes the relationship between stopping patterns and ridership and that accessibility, mobility, and connectivity are important factors.

Andreas Aeppli (Cambridge Systematics) adds that, due to the limited service frequency of 5 trains, generally the practice is to try to put the same service out across all trains.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Ben Lamb who expressed excitement to see a realistic opportunity to bolster the economy of the entire Commonwealth through such a high impact project.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Senator Jo Comerford who agrees with Andy about the benefit of seeing longer term, community based economic projections for the Northern Tier communities, and says a climate impact analysis for the electrified service to help have a fuller picture of return on investment.

Chris Barkan offers appreciation for the presentation and asks why the ridership for electrification is estimated to be higher than higher investment.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) explains that the reduction in trip time allowed for the addition of stations which generated additional ridership.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) adds that including Ayer as a station stop adds ridership to Alternative 3.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) shares that the team will be able to respond to all remaining questions and comments after the meeting.

7. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the next steps, which include making refinements and developing recommended next steps based on the feedback received, and thanks members of the public for attending and sharing their comments and questions. She encourages attendees to visit the Study website to submit additional comments or questions or sign up for Study updates. The materials from this meeting, including the video recording, will be made available on the Study website.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #2 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles – MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry – HNTB
- Paul Nelson – HNTB
- Sara Stoja – HNTB
- Rachel Gies - HNTB
- Andreas Aeppli – Cambridge Systematics
- Sofia Clark – City Point Partners
- Julie Callahan – City Point Partners

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Alice Bojanowski | 27. Christine Copeland |
| 2. Allen Pope | 28. Christopher Rodriguez |
| 3. Amy Proietti | 29. Claire McGinnis |
| 4. Andrew Fitch | 30. Clete Kus |
| 5. Andy Hogeland | 31. Clint Richmond |
| 6. Ann Hennessey | 32. Connor Kowalski |
| 7. Anne Miller | 33. Dale Waterman |
| 8. Anthony Jewell | 34. Dan Peacock |
| 9. Anthony Manica | 35. Dana Roscoe |
| 10. Barbara Alexander | 36. Daniel Racicot |
| 11. Ben Heckscher | 37. David Greenberg |
| 12. Ben Lamb | 38. Dawn Nelson |
| 13. Benjamin Condit | 39. Deborah Benoit |
| 14. Bob Seay | 40. Debra Smith |
| 15. Brad Clements | 41. Diane Parsons |
| 16. Brad Harris | 42. Donna Bell |
| 17. Brian Parkinson | 43. Donna Riggs |
| 18. Brianna Drohen | 44. Drew David |
| 19. Bruce Spencer | 45. Edward Hines |
| 20. C Mark Blatchley | 46. Elain He |
| 21. Candace Hope | 47. Elaine Sednek |
| 22. Cara Sturdevant | 48. Elena Cohen |
| 23. Carolyn Sellars | 49. Eliana Tetreault |
| 24. Carrie Greene | 50. Elizabeth Giannini |
| 25. Casey Pease | 51. Emily Bayard |
| 26. Chris Barkan | 52. Emily Crowley |

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 53. Emily Villegas | 94. Kathleen Lewis |
| 54. Evan Fox | 95. Kathryn Soule-Regine |
| 55. Ezekiel Baskin | 96. Kevin Bowe |
| 56. Faith Williams | 97. Kristen Elechko |
| 57. Ferd Wulkan | 98. Kristin Cole |
| 58. Fran Fortino | 99. Larry Kuttner |
| 59. Frances Ludington | 100. Larry Mitchell |
| 60. Franny Osman | 101. Liam Carey |
| 61. Fred Heyes | 102. Linda Dunlavy |
| 62. Fungai T | 103. Lisa Blackmer |
| 63. Geve Mollins | 104. Lisa Danek Burke |
| 64. Gillian Budine | 105. Marcel LaFlamme |
| 65. Glenn Eaton | 106. Marcus Bean |
| 66. Grady VerPlanck | 107. Marie King |
| 67. Greg Snedeker | 108. Marie-Elena Bigelow |
| 68. Gregory Cox | 109. Marjorie Kaye |
| 69. Hannah Rechtschaffen | 110. Mary Ann Sacco |
| 70. Isaak Baranoski | 111. Matthew VanHeynigen |
| 71. James Mussoni | 112. Melinda LeLacheur |
| 72. Janice Rowan | 113. Meryl Mandell |
| 73. Janice Sorensen | 114. Michael Wagner |
| 74. Jared Cowing | 115. Mikael Pyrtel |
| 75. Jennifer Bernard | 116. Mike Small |
| 76. Jennifer Waryas | 117. Milo Chang |
| 77. Jennifer West | 118. Molly Rapp |
| 78. Jenny Wright | 119. Morgan Everett |
| 79. Jeri Moran | 120. Nancy Klaips |
| 80. Jim Mahon | 121. Nancy Slator |
| 81. Senator Jo Comerford | 122. Representative Natalie Blais |
| 82. Joe Kurland | 123. Nikki Garrett |
| 83. Johan Sednek | 124. Pam Harty |
| 84. John Anhalt | 125. Pam Roberts |
| 85. Representative John Barrett | 126. Patricia Murray |
| 86. John Garrett | 127. Paul Lipke |
| 87. John Hostage | 128. Paula Consolini |
| 88. John Waite | 129. Raquel Jardim |
| 89. Jonathan Franklin | 130. Rebecca Bialecki |
| 90. K only | 131. Rebecca Merrell |
| 91. Kali Puppolo | 132. Remy Housley |
| 92. Kate Richardson | 133. Reona Kubomiya |
| 93. Katherine Montgomery | 134. Richard Colton |

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 135. Richard Solomon | 148. Susan Abrams |
| 136. Robert Heller | 149. Susan Cloutier |
| 137. Robert Slys | 150. Taylor Guss |
| 138. Ross Jacobs | 151. Thomas Green |
| 139. Roxann Wedegartner | 152. Thomas Matuszko |
| 140. Ruby Siegel | 153. Tim Pyper |
| 141. Scott Bastarache | 154. Tom Bernard |
| 142. Sharon Tracy | 155. Trevor Brightman |
| 143. Shaun Schofield | 156. Wil Neeley |
| 144. Shaun Suhoski | 157. Yaroslava Yashchuk |
| 145. Simon Kent | 158. Zeffa Kinney |
| 146. Soren Henry | 159. Zoom user |
| 147. Steven Ellis | |

Appendix A – Additional Public Comments Received

Question	Asker Name	Answer
What is the minimum and maximum projected time for rail service to become available under any of the alternatives? (Is it a matter of months, years, decades...)	Kate Richardson	As various steps are necessary prior to any implementation, a sample implementation timeline may be presented at upcoming meetings.
Can Paul speak in more detail about the VMT Reduction analysis - does it just analyze the Route 2 corridor VMT reduction, or does it also include MassPike VMT reduction benefits? I live in Williamstown and currently drive to Boston at least monthly. Many of those trips are driving Route 7 south to the MassPike East rather than on Route 2. I think that is quite common among people in the northern Berkshire area of North Adams/Williamstown/Pittsfield community. And this train service would be a game changer for those Pike travelers.	Thomas Green	The VMT reduction calculations assume that trips shifting to rail currently use Route 2.
As much as I would like to see all lines electrified, I don't see it as realistic for this project. See the example of South Coast Rail. Alternative 4 (local service) seems the most realistic. Forcing people to change trains in Fitchburg is a non-starter. Extending to Albany shows little benefit for the cost.	John Hostage	Thank you for your comments, John.
David Greenberg, Colrain: Thanks for reaching out to us. I strongly believe that we should be electrifying everything as our climate plan requires, so I support the electric train option.	David Greenberg	Thank you for your comments, David.
as a frequent Rt 2 traveler,i noticed pratically particularly heavier traffic between Fitchburg and Gardner. The local option would best alleviate this situation and remove alot of traffic problems on Rt2 I believe.	James Mussoni	Thank you for your comments, James.
Thank you for representing the North Quabbin Rebecca!!!	Brianna Drohen	Thank you for your comments, Brianna.

Q. Why do the capital cost estimates assumed that MassDOT would need to purchase new rolling stock for this service? MassDOT has other intercity rail service in region, as example the Valley Flyer. The Valley Flyer was started without the need to purchase new equipment.	Ben Heckscher	The Valley Flyer was implemented by extending the route covered by existing intercity equipment, whereas there is currently no operating intercity equipment in the Northern Tier corridor.
What is the estimated cost per ride for example from Greenfield to Boston and N. Adams to Boston, one-way and round trip?	Fran Fortino	Thank you for the question, Fran. Fare policy is typically developed further along in the development of a transportation service and was not the focus of this study at this stage of conceptual planning.
When projecting ridership did you consider how much a draw MassMOCA would be?	Mike Small	The projected ridership incorporates information from trips recorded by location-based service (LBS) vendors to MassMOCA and other major destinations in the corridor.
Thank you for your very thorough work! Your “eye charts” are very helpful! I’m very supportive of the return of some form of rail service to northern Berkshire County and support the local stops option. Would the plan be to build the service from West to East or East to West?	Paula Consolini	The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is a conceptual planning study assessing rail service alternatives along the North Adams-Greenfield-Boston corridor.
I’ll do a better job of helping to promote these events, then. Thanks, Makaela.	Andrew Fitch	Thank you for your participation and engagement, Andrew.
My biggest concern is for increased connectivity to NS rail in Greenfield	C Mark Blatchley	Thank you for your comment, C Mark. Improving connectivity and increasing mobility are key objectives of the study.
Susan Cloutier New Salem Select board I hope any parking and station development include solar electric generation facilities and recharge stations.	Susan Cloutier	Thank you for your comments, Susan.
I understand this is early in the process, but has the benefit of and for the proximal higher education institutions been included in further analysis plans? For instance I would anticipate easier access to MCLA in North Adams as a potential booster for enrollment and participation in programs.	Ben Lamb	Improving connectivity and access to destinations is one of the objectives of the study. The proposed alternatives aim to provide combinations of various elements to test how these characteristics relate to each

		other, while meeting the goals and objectives of the study.
I love hearing all the good work you all have done to reflect our wishes. My request: In future presentations, please also provide projections for the avoidance of fossil fuel use in the event that the electrified option is adopted.	K only	Thank you for your comments, K. Benefits such as avoided emissions will be included as part of the benefit-cost analysis.
Another request is whether you can address phasing of the project, so aspects of train service can begin relatively sooner, without waiting for everything to be built. We'd like to see how service can commence as soon as reasonably feasible.	Andy Hogeland	Thank you, Andy. The potential for phasing may be further examined as part of this or any future planning activities.
I would second Andy Hogeland's suggestion about trying to model the broader, longer-term economic development effects of this--especially as an aid to the process of decongestion of the Boston metro area. Daily commuters might come in from Athol. People working remotely but coming in to a Boston office once or twice a week might be able to move to the Greenfield area, or even to lovely North Adams.	Jim Mahon	Thank you for your comments, Jim.
I have a lot of concern with drainage under the track as many of the culverts date from earliest efforts to put a rail line here in the 1800's.	C Mark Blatchley	Stormwater run-off and the adequacy of drainage infrastructure may be evaluated as part of any future planning activities.
For the next public meeting, would it be possible to include a more in-depth climate analysis -- focusing on the carbon-reduction benefits of all electric service (not only the vehicle reduction, but the electric service itself)?	Elena Cohen	Environmental benefits may be discussed further at the next round of meetings.

If we go with an alternative that increases local stops in central and particularly eastern Mass, it will increase travel time for people in western Mass. I'm concerned that could decrease ridership in the west.	Emily Bayard	Thank you for your comment, Emily. The proposed alternatives aim to provide combinations of these elements to test how these characteristics relate to each other, while meeting the goals and objectives of the study.
Thank you so much for those comments about electrification being so high! How will we reach our climate change goals if we don't start electrifying.	Christine Copeland	Minimizing the impacts of public health and the environment from transportation is one of the goals of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The proposed alternatives aim to provide combinations of various elements to test how these characteristics relate to each other, while meeting the goals and objectives of the study.
The answer to why it is more expensive is prevailing wage.	Rebecca Merrell	Thank you for your comments, Rebecca.
Thank you, Makaela, Anna, Paul, and Andreas for all your work on this! This is Ezekiel Baskin from the New England Rural Health Association. I just wanted to echo many others in their support for this - especially for alternatives 3 & 4. I would love to see an electrified alternative with full local service. Transportation is a key social determinant of health, especially in rural communities like those in the North Quabbin that have long histories of underinvestment from the state, and having access to rail would have a significant positive impact on health outcomes as well as economic development.	Ezekiel Baskin	Thank you for your comments, Ezekiel.
I assume it was mentioned before I arrived, and will hear that on the recording, but if not, can you comment on the relationship between this connection and the North South Rail Link? AND other question is what best way for residents to advocate for this rail connection.	Franny Osman	The Northern Tier passenger rail service alternatives in this study terminate at Boston's North Station. Related to advocacy, please connect with your elected officials regarding this effort.

I would also like to express my support for the electrification option. The environmental benefits, over time, might even become a factor to attract even more ridership from folks who want to live conscientiously. More analysis on long-term environmental impacts of electrification vs. diesel would not only be great for educating the public on the options, but also for galvanizing support among more groups, particularly as gen-z enters the workforce.	Kate Richardson	Thank you for your comments, Kate.
Let's not undermine the speed of the trip across the state by adding too many local stops	Susan Abrams	Thank you for your comments, Susan.
I am very interested in understanding outgoing traffic to towns as destination centers for increased tourist \$	C Mark Blatchley	Estimated induced benefits from the project have been calculated in relation to the construction spending. Additional types of induced benefits may be further studied as part of this or other efforts.
Does the economic development impact consider commercial in addition to residential real estate?	Brianna Drohen	The benefit-cost analysis incorporates an estimated increase in real estate values (including both commercial and residential uses) within a certain proximity to the proposed train stations.
Is Amtrak the only rail service that is currently being considered to use the rail, or is there a possibility that MassDOT would have its own passenger rail service, similar to CTail on the Hartford Line?	Kate Richardson	Thank you for the question, Kate. The study assumed Amtrak may operate the proposed service. Please note that Amtrak is the only railroad that has rights of access to the facilities of any other railroad or regional transportation authority.
I'm excited by this project, any option is better than what we currently have! I'd like to be another voice of support for electrification, might as well do it now rather than redo it in a few years. Also happy to see more stations on the list. I think the worst option would be to stop in	Drew David	Thank you for your comments, Drew.

Fitchburg instead of going all the way to Boston.		
FTA runs a bus to Northampton students could take. But not on weekends.	Mike Small	Thank you for this insight, Mike.
Thank you for providing this opportunity tonight. As someone who commutes to Boston from a hilltown west of Shelburne Falls, having this service would be invaluable. As a rider the number one priority is the reducing ride time. The lower cost alternative(s) would not provide a ride time that would make it worth it to use a commuting alternative. One note, the towns west of Shelburne Falls will likely NOT go to North Adams to ride to Boston (as shown in slide), we would get on in Greenfield. Thank You.	Lisa Danek Burke	Thank you for your comments, Lisa.
Thank you SO much!	Dawn Nelson	Thank you for your participation and engagement, Dawn.
Excellent presentation—thank you so much~	Susan Abrams	Thank you for your participation and engagement, Susan.
Thank you!	Kathryn Soule-Regine	Thank you for your participation and engagement, Kathryn.



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group Meeting #4
Thursday, March 21, 2024, 1:00 PM
Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group met for the fourth and final time on March 21, 2024. At this meeting, the Study team shared an overview of the study's background, reviewed the study alternatives, outlined issues and opportunities to consider, presented draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan, and garnered feedback. The meeting was also open to members of the public, who were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules, and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the fourth and final Working Group meeting and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself, thanks all participants, and explains the meeting notes and procedures including how to participate. She then introduces the agenda for the Working Group meeting, which includes an overview of the study, review of alternatives, presentation of issues and opportunities for consideration, draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan, Working Group discussion, public comment, and finally next steps.

2. *Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study overview and process, which includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory, and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

The Study team presents the goals and objectives for the Study, which are to:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity
- Minimize the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

3. *Study Alternatives Review by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the two-phase alternatives development process. Phase 1 developed a “Lower Investment Alternative” and a “Higher Investment Alternative,” which were presented at the public workshop to obtain feedback. Phase 2 used that feedback to develop four additional alternatives for providing service along the corridor.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) opens with the Phase 1 alternatives. Alternative 1, *Lower Investment*, features five round-trip trains per day stopping at four stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, and North Station) and improvements to portions of the tracks and associated infrastructure. Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, also features five trains per day and the same four stations, with a higher level of infrastructure improvements that would allow faster train speeds.

She then introduces the Phase 2 alternatives, which were developed based upon stakeholder feedback from Phase 1. All the Phase 2 alternatives build on Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, and the faster service allowed by those track improvements. Alternative 3, *Electrified Service*, would feature electrified services via overhead catenary wire and stops at seven stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg, Ayer, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 4, *Full Local Service*, would feature stops at eight stations (North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 5, *Albany Extension*, would extend service to Albany, NY, serving seven stations (Albany and Schenectady in New York, North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 6, *Northern Tier Rail Link*, would provide service to North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, and Fitchburg, and require passengers to transfer to the MBTA Commuter Rail’s Fitchburg Line for service to North Station.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) presents the evaluation criteria used to compare the six alternatives: service frequency, number of stations served, eastbound travel times and how they compare to driving, maximum train speeds, environmental impacts, passenger rail impacts, freight rail impacts, community/safety impacts (e.g., grade crossings), estimated annual ridership, capital cost per mile and capital cost per rider, operating and maintenance cost per rider, transportation cost savings for riding versus driving, annual reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT), and economic impacts from construction of the new service (e.g., track improvements, new stations, etc.). He explains the factors that affect each item (e.g., stopping patterns and estimated ridership) and how the total estimated cost for each alternative was determined. He reviews the total costs for the alternatives and explains the total capital cost and the total annual operations and maintenance costs. He then discusses the benefit-cost analysis (BCA). He states that the key takeaways are that all alternatives are estimated to provide connectivity, mobility, and choice, and are estimated to provide positive environmental and economic impacts. He notes that Alternatives 3 and 4 generate the highest ridership levels and the measurements associated with them, including transportation cost savings and VMT reduction.

4. *Issues and Opportunities by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the governance (who will oversee existing or new intercity passenger rail service within the Commonwealth) was examined by the Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission, which recommends that current and new intercity passenger rail services should be developed and operated by MassDOT.

She discusses Compass Rail, a regional rail network initiative for east-west and north-south rail services in Massachusetts. She notes that this is intercity rail (not commuter rail) and is administered by MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division, which partners with Amtrak, CSX, and abutting states.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) discusses access considerations and notes that the host railroads and the passenger rail operator would need to consent for service to occur and to obtain federal funds. She also discusses the existing infrastructure, stating that there are many unknowns regarding how repairs or improvements to bridges, tunnels, etc., might affect the cost. Cost estimates include contingencies, but costs could still increase due to unknowns.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) discusses the current population projections and how population trends affect ridership projections. He states that population at the western end of the corridor is projected to decline while population at the central portion of the corridor is expected to increase modestly. He notes that pandemic-related changes in population and travel patterns could be further evaluated.

He discusses the intersection of housing and transportation, and what supporting infrastructure may be needed - such as impacts on schools, local businesses, and tourism opportunities. He then presents potential funding opportunities, including federal funding programs, state funding programs, and local funding and financing programs.

5. *Draft Recommended Next Steps, by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the draft recommended next steps for the Study, which are to:

- Continue to improve understanding of travel demand along the Northern Tier corridor, corridor segments, and linkages to key regional destinations;
- Continue to advance planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities, including at potential station locations;
- Explore scheduled motor coach service to Northern Tier corridor destinations;
- Evaluate alternative phasing or implementation strategies;
- Evaluate express service between Fitchburg and Boston;
- Monitor freight use and trends in the corridor to explore needs/opportunities for public investment; and
- Develop strategies for improving rail connections within the corridor to meet study goals of supporting economic development, transportation equity, and minimizing impacts to public health and the environment.

6. Draft Implementation Plan by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces the draft implementation plan and the six-step project development process of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) from planning through operation. She mentions that the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study falls under the earliest stage of this implementation process (systems planning) and presents a sample implementation timeline.

7. Working Group Discussion by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks for questions and comments from the Working Group. She reviews the protocol for asking questions and/or leaving comments.

Jackson Moore-Otto asks about Class 4 versus Class 5 track (i.e., speed categories) and why Class 4 seems to be the maximum considered for this project.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the study looked at reasonable increases in speed based on track conditions at this stage.

Kevin Lynch notes that Norfolk Southern is a part owner of Pan Am Southern and is one of the host railroads along the corridor.

Dan Rivera asks about the federal grants presented and what the monetary gap would be anticipated to be between the grant money likely to be awarded and the actual construction cost; and then asked how the federal grants will inform the project cost and decisions.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that some efforts are yet to be undertaken before the project could consider applying for grants and that what grants are available will depend on the project timing as federal grants change over time.

Representative John Barrett expresses concern about the study's timeline and states that the process keeps adding items rather than reaching a final report that can advance to the next steps. He wants to see action and receive answers. He mentions the economy in the area he represents and expresses that rail, along with broadband, are ways to boost it.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks Representative Barrett for sharing these comments and concerns and notes that the draft recommendations presented aim to advance this effort.

Senator Jo Comerford thanks the team for their work. She then asks about the exploration of funding and investing in this effort moving forward.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) responds that the funding sources shared in the presentation will be documented in the draft final report.

Senator Comerford then asks a follow-up question: Is MassDOT going to push forward in exploring those funding potentials?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) responds that funding strategies will be explored as specific portions of the project are identified and realized.

Jackson Moore-Otto asks: Will actual cost assumptions be made public? To what extent has the project team been in conversation with the Rail Transformation Office of the MBTA? Will improvements be made to the Fitchburg to North Station segment of the line? Might the Fitchburg Line be electrified, and travel time speeded up?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) mentions that the cost analysis will be included in the appendices to the final project study report, which will be available to the public.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that no improvements to the MBTA Fitchburg Line were considered for this study; however, it is assumed that by the time this project is underway, electrification of the Fitchburg Line will already have been completed. She mentions that there would need to be coordination with the MBTA.

Representative Natalie Blais states that it is her understanding that the study has been funded, but there is no more funding to do any more work on a study.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) notes that this study is looking at conceptual planning for the corridor and confirms that there is no additional funding for study at this time.

Representative Blais asks how a decision would be made as to what the best plan is to move forward and what that process looks like.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that, based on the feedback received and the analysis, Alternatives 3 and 4 (electrified service and full local service) might be the options that are advanced for further development.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) confirms that Alternatives 3 and 4 had the best measurements and metrics related to benefits and cost effectiveness. She mentions the project development, environmental, and governance processes, and notes that the alternatives would need to be reviewed in greater detail in preparation for any potential funding opportunities.

Representative Blais asks if the preferred alternative is something that the Commonwealth would need to address in order to determine whether or not to apply for available federal funds.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) mentions that some federal funding programs can support planning and that largely it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to determine the direction to take.

Representative Blais mentions governance and asks to clarify that MassDOT is the agency that would take on determining what the next steps are.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that MassDOT has the responsibility to administer the programs and executes the policy decisions of the legislature and the governor.

Representative Blais notes that the recent governance study said that MassDOT should be the one to oversee rail development in Western Massachusetts and asks for clarification on how decisions will be made.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) mentions that state and federal planning processes require documented community input, as well as measurements and metrics that show benefits and costs, to demonstrate that there is a consensus behind the choice made.

Representative Blais mentions that MassDOT would be the organization to oversee the analysis and determine what the next best step forward is before applying for federal funds and notes the benefit-cost analysis. She also asks about the benefit-cost for West-East Rail.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that different grant programs have different criteria and notes that some of the grant programs for discrete types of improvements might be able to be funded.

Representative Blais states that there is a great deal of excitement for this project and for the economic development it could bring and encourages MassDOT to move forward quickly.

Representative Barrett comments that the funding issues have been brought up in previous Working Group meetings and emphasizes that the study is entering its third year and expresses frustration that things have to start to happen.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks him for his comments and states that the team looked at funding at the federal, state, and local levels that, in combination, could address either in part or all of the development of the process. She notes that some of the funding sources address planning, others address construction, and some address both planning and construction.

Representative Barrett points to funding available for passenger train service in Western MA and states that some of it should begin to be used for this project.

8. Public Comment by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the floor to questions and comments from the general public.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Andrew who asks, if the Albany extension were implemented, would New York State contribute to the construction costs?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that for intercity passenger rail projects, states would need to be engaged and agree to the service, as well as any associated costs.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Frank who asks, has any consideration been given to adding a multi-use path along the rail line?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the focus of the effort was the implementation of passenger rail service, so the potential for multi-use paths were not addressed in the study but that does not preclude the possibility of it in the future. She notes that anything within the right-of-way has to be agreed upon by the owners as well as any partner states there may be.

Andy Hogeland thanks the team and asks about the economic benefits of the project and whether more detailed work, such as broadening the scope of topics, will be done as part of this or a future effort.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that the primary economic benefits examined were those due to construction and the travel benefits tied to having people travel on the rail service, and the use of benefit-cost analysis guidance. He mentions that other potential benefits could be looked at in more detail.

Price Armstrong (Cambridge Systematics) adds that the benefit-cost analysis is one of the key frameworks for pursuing federal funding and mentions qualitative and alternative lenses for looking at induced economic development.

Jacob Harrington (UMass Donahue Institute) adds that some benefits are uncertain and are difficult to quantify because of changes that can happen in the years after a service begins.

Carl Fowler states that the terminus of the service should be Williamstown due to its tourism destinations and academic institutions. He also states that connectivity from Vermont should be considered.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) notes that the legislation for this study directed MassDOT to conduct a feasibility study of rail access between Boston to North Adams, and that is the background on why North Adams was considered to be the terminus for the majority of the alternatives.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Andrew who asks, does the Albany extension ridership assumption factor in visitors who might come to the Berkshires from Albany and New York City?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that the ridership numbers took multiple factors into account such as population and employment data, and trip data within the corridor around the station locations. He adds for Carl that Williamstown was incorporated within the catchment area that was examined and that a variant that includes a Williamstown station and its potential benefits could be looked at. He states that while trips in New York within proximity to the borders of Massachusetts were incorporated, New York City ridership was not captured.

Joe Kurland states that he is eager for this project to be implemented and that the full local service (Alternative 4) including Williamstown is important.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Paula who asks, what will it take for the Northern Tier to be added to the Compass Rail schematic?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that Compass Rail is an evolving effort and as the Northern Tier progresses it may be added to the process.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Jim who asks, what would the ridership have to be to get the benefit-cost ratio to 1?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that ridership would have to be significantly higher. He adds that there are opportunities to grow awareness and interest in train travel within the corridor and that varying the frequency, coverage area, associated costs, and other elements could be a place to start to achieve a higher benefit-cost ratio.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Dave who asks, why contract with Amtrak when the state has a dedicated Commuter Rail workforce?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) mentions the two different types of passenger rail services (intercity and commuter rail) and explains that commuter rail involves high frequency, peak-oriented service and intercity service has fewer stops, greater distances between stops, and less frequency compared to commuter rail service. She notes that Amtrak is the intercity rail operator in the U.S. and their right of access to rights-of-way.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Ben who asks how the business community has been engaged, and mentions that between workforce, tourism, and hybrid work, it seems business opportunities go beyond what a pure number analysis can represent.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the impacts on businesses were examined and notes the participation through the study's Working Group.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) adds that the potential impact of relocation and hybrid work are factors that would be recommended to be examined.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks everyone for sharing their comments, questions, and concerns.

9. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) informs the meeting attendees of the public meeting being held next week and invites everyone to register and attend. She states that following that meeting, a draft final report will be released and made available for public comment, then finalized in a

final report. She thanks attendees for their participation and encourages visiting the study website to sign up for study updates and to share additional feedback, comments, and questions. She mentions that the materials from this meeting will be made available on the Study website. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) wishes everyone a good rest of their day and concludes the meeting.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group Meeting #4 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles - MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry - HNTB
- Paul Nelson - HNTB
- Price Armstrong - Cambridge Systematics
- Jacob Harrington - UMass Donahue Institute
- Sofia Clark – HDR | City Point Partners

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Elizabeth Quigley – Office of Congressman Richard Neal
2. Jo Comerford - State Senator
3. John Barrett - State Representative
4. Natalie Blais - State Representative
5. Linda Dunlavy - Franklin Regional Council of Governments
6. Robert Malnati - Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
7. Thomas Matuszko - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
8. Bruno Fisher – Montachusett Regional Transit Authority
9. Marco Turra – CSX Transportation
10. Kevin Lynch - Norfolk Southern Railway
11. Jackson Moore-Otto - TransitMatters
12. Dan Rivera - MassDevelopment
13. Roy Nascimento - North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Andreas Aepli | 9. Michael Fesen |
| 2. Alexander Bergstrand | 10. Andrew Fitch |
| 3. Gus Bickford | 11. Carl Fowler |
| 4. Amy Cahillane | 12. Jacquelyn Goddard |
| 5. Frank Citino | 13. Tyler Godin |
| 6. Elena Cohen | 14. Thomas Green |
| 7. Paula Consolini | 15. Ryan Griffis |
| 8. Paige Dolinski | 16. Ben Heckscher |

17. Andy Hogeland
18. George Kahale
19. Joe Kurland
20. Benjamin Lamb
21. Jerry Lund
22. Jim Mahon
23. Linda Maloney
24. Grego Mori
25. Mary Ann Nessel
26. Dawn Nims

27. Walker Powell
28. Kali Puppolo
29. Leo Quigley
30. Sidney Rothstein
31. Richard Rudolph
32. Eric Smith
33. Patrick Snyder
34. Dave Stevenson
35. Susan Templeton
36. Jenny Wright



Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #3

Thursday, March 28, 2024, 6:00 PM

Held Virtually Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study team held a third and final Public Information Meeting on March 28, 2024. At this meeting, the Study team shared an overview of the study's background, reviewed the study alternatives, outlined issues and opportunities to consider, presented draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan. Members of the public were given the opportunity to share comments and questions at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Notes

1. *Welcome, Ground Rules, and Agenda by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

All attendees are welcomed to the third and final virtual public meeting of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study and are informed that the meeting is being recorded. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces herself and explains the ground rules for the meeting including how the public can participate. She then introduces the agenda for the meeting, which includes an overview of the study, review of alternatives, presentation of issues and opportunities for consideration, draft recommended next steps and draft implementation plan, public comment, and finally next steps.

2. *Study Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) explains the Study overview and process, which includes the following:

- Public participation
- Documenting past efforts
- Market analysis
- Physical, regulatory, and right-of-way (ROW) ownership
- Potential service plans and alternatives
- Alternatives evaluation and cost estimate
- Development of recommended next steps

The Study team presents the goals and objectives for the Study, which are to:

- Support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor
- Promote transportation equity

- Minimize the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation

3. *Study Alternatives Review by Anna M. Barry and Paul Nelson, HNTB*

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) reviews the two-phase alternatives development process. Phase 1 developed a “Lower Investment Alternative” and a “Higher Investment Alternative,” which were presented at the public workshop to obtain feedback. Phase 2 used that feedback to develop four additional alternatives for providing service along the corridor.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) opens with the Phase 1 alternatives. Alternative 1, *Lower Investment*, features five round-trip trains per day stopping at four stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, and North Station) and improvements to portions of the tracks and associated infrastructure. Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, also features five trains per day and the same four stations, with a higher level of infrastructure improvements that would allow faster train speeds.

She then introduces the Phase 2 alternatives, which were developed based upon stakeholder feedback from Phase 1. All the Phase 2 alternatives build on Alternative 2, *Higher Investment*, and the faster service allowed by those track improvements. Alternative 3, *Electrified Service*, would feature electrified services via overhead catenary wire and stops at seven stations (North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg, Ayer, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 4, *Full Local Service*, would feature stops at eight stations (North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 5, *Albany Extension*, would extend service to Albany, NY, serving seven stations (Albany and Schenectady in New York, North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter, and North Station). Alternative 6, *Northern Tier Rail Link*, would provide service to North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, and Fitchburg, and require passengers to transfer to the MBTA Commuter Rail’s Fitchburg Line for service to North Station.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) presents the evaluation criteria used to compare the six alternatives: service frequency, number of stations served, eastbound travel times and how they compare to driving, maximum train speeds, environmental impacts, passenger rail impacts, freight rail impacts, community/safety impacts (e.g., grade crossings), estimated annual ridership, capital cost per mile and capital cost per rider, operating and maintenance cost per rider, transportation cost savings for riding versus driving, annual reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT), and economic impacts from construction of the new service (e.g., track improvements, new stations, etc.). He explains the factors that affect each item (e.g., stopping patterns and estimated ridership) and how the total estimated cost for each alternative was determined. He reviews the total costs for the alternatives and explains the total capital cost and the total annual operations and maintenance costs. He then discusses the benefit-cost analysis (BCA). He states that the key takeaways are that all alternatives are estimated to provide connectivity, mobility, and choice, and are estimated to provide positive environmental and economic impacts. He notes that Alternatives 3 and 4 generate the highest ridership levels and the measurements associated with them, including transportation cost savings and VMT reduction.

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Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the governance (who will oversee existing or new intercity passenger rail service within the Commonwealth) was examined by the Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission, which recommends that current and new intercity passenger rail services should be developed and operated by MassDOT.

She discusses Compass Rail, a regional rail network initiative for east-west and north-south rail services in Massachusetts. She notes that this is intercity rail (not commuter rail) and is administered by MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division, which partners with Amtrak, CSX, and abutting states.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) discusses access considerations and notes that the host railroads and the passenger rail operator would need to consent for service to occur and to obtain federal funds. She also discusses the existing infrastructure, stating that there are many unknowns regarding how repairs or improvements to bridges, tunnels, etc., might affect the cost. Cost estimates include contingencies, but costs could still increase due to unknowns.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) discusses the current population projections and how population trends affect ridership projections. He states that population at the western end of the corridor is projected to decline while population at the central portion of the corridor is expected to increase modestly. He notes that pandemic-related changes in population and travel patterns could be further evaluated.

He discusses the intersection of housing and transportation, and what supporting infrastructure may be needed - such as impacts on schools, local businesses, and tourism opportunities. He then presents potential funding opportunities, including federal funding programs, state funding programs, and local funding and financing programs.

5. *Draft Recommended Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)*

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) presents the draft recommended next steps for the Study, which are to:

- Continue to improve understanding of travel demand along the Northern Tier corridor, corridor segments, and linkages to key regional destinations;
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- Explore scheduled motor coach service to Northern Tier corridor destinations;
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- Monitor freight use and trends in the corridor to explore needs/opportunities for public investment; and
- Develop strategies for improving rail connections within the corridor to meet study goals of supporting economic development, transportation equity, and minimizing impacts to public health and the environment.

6. Draft Implementation Plan by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) introduces the draft implementation plan and the six-step project development process of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) from planning through operation. She mentions that the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study falls under the earliest stage of this implementation process (systems planning) and presents a sample implementation timeline.

7. Public Comment by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) opens the floor to questions and comments from elected officials and members of their staff in attendance.

Andrew Fitch, North Adams City Councilor, asks why trains would be limited to 80 mph, how people in North Adams can be most effective in advocating for train service, and expresses support for the Albany Extension option because of the tourism and academic institution draws and the potential to improve traffic from New York City.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the 80-mph speed limit is due to the class of track and the associated speed limit.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) describes the ridership estimation process and the data used to assess trips. He adds that train speeds are also limited due to the curved alignment of the Northern Tier corridor as well as the track class.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) adds that stakeholder engagement is necessary to advance the process to develop projects and move from planning into projects.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Ashley Shade, North Adams City Council Vice President, who asks about estimated ticket costs.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that fare planning and policy would be developed further along in project planning and fares would depend partly on how the system would be overseen.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: how many people are participating tonight?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) responds that there are currently 240 attendees.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: In terms of the recommended next steps, does MassDOT have the funding necessary to undertake this work?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) explains that some federal programs offer grants for additional planning and preliminary design activities and notes that the Federal Railroad Administration has grants for intercity passenger rail projects.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Senator Jo Comerford who asks: What was the BCA for West-East rail service from Pittsfield to Boston?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the design and construction costs were high, and estimated ridership was low. Paul Nelson (HNTB) (later in the meeting) states that the BCA was not above 1.

Virginia Desorgher, Mayor of Greenfield, says that Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service would be a game-changer and encourages the effort to move forward.

David Martin, Acton Select Board, asks about synergy or overlap with Commuter Rail electrification especially with Alternative 3. He asks about cost implications and, if not electrification, will it be diesel locomotives in areas where Commuter Rail has been electrified?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the study assumes that MBTA would electrify Commuter Rail and did not include the electrification of Commuter Rail territory as part of the Northern Tier study or its costs. She mentions that any initial Northern Tier services could be diesel.

Senator Jo Comerford encourages stakeholder engagement to gain the game-changing aspects of this rail service, and states that the entire Northern Tier state delegation is united in support of moving forward at the fastest pace possible.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Lora Wondolowski, Greenfield City Councilor, who asks who will take the lead in applying for the federal grants mentioned?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) states that federal grants are very specific in identifying who can apply for them and partnerships around rail service can also apply and be rewarded. He notes that a key to many of the grant applications is to get letters of support.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) then opens the questions to members of the public in attendance.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Joe, who asks if the reason the Albany Extension ridership estimate is so low is because it only counts people using that section?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that there is competing service on the Albany-Boston route, plus the route is circuitous and therefore slower than other services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a comment from Joe, who states that at last week's session someone advocated for service to Williamstown, and he agrees with that addition and would also like to see a station in Charlemont to serve the recreational businesses there.

Carl Sailor mentions having heard that passenger lines can attract ridership not necessarily from car trips, but from people who wouldn't have travelled otherwise and asks if there is anything in place, similar to an advertising campaign, to attract new ridership from car users.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that a marketing campaign would generally happen closer to the opening of a service in the year or so before it would begin.

Halley Kelly asks how theoretical fares are considered when estimating ridership.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that fare prices were not considered in determining ridership at this point; the attractiveness of the service, travel time comparisons, and changes in population were considered. She mentions that generally fares and fare policy are set further along in the process.

Marcel LaFlamme mentions Compass Rail and wants to make sure that the needs of the Northern Tier are not subsumed under a Springfield service model.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Tracy, who asks about parking fees not being factored into Albany estimated ridership.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that parking fees in Albany were not considered as part of the transportation cost savings.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Aimee, who asks whether grants or incentives for reducing CO₂ or particulates might apply to Alternative 3 and, if so, have those been factored into the cost estimates?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) replies that revenue sources have not been incorporated into the cost estimates and notes that the cost estimates represent the cost of making the infrastructure improvements.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Alice, who asks about whether improved electrification could be added later for Alternative 4?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that catenary could be added later and is feasible, and notes that service would have to be adjusted while the work is being done.

William Quale echoes Mayor Desorgher's comments that this service will be a game-changer for communities in Franklin County and asks about future demand and the potential for higher frequency in the future.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that intercity passenger rail services such as this one generally have lesser frequency, which is why the study looked at five trains in each direction per day. She mentions that the impact and cost of additional trains could be further analyzed for future decision-making.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Rauley, who asks, did the economic benefit estimations of Alternative 3 take the follow-on benefits of electrification of the MBTA Fitchburg Line into account?

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that both the benefits and the costs of the MBTA territory being electrified were not calculated.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Halley, who asks, do the avoided emissions include healthcare costs from inhaling emissions or just environmental damages?

Price Armstrong (Cambridge Systematics) responds that the values that went into the BCA for the emissions benefits take health benefits into account as defined by and in conformance with the federal guidelines.

Arthur Millet asks about how people from smaller towns will get to and from the stations and if there is anything to solve the last mile issue.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that these types of infrastructure and services would need to be planned and implemented as part of any service in collaboration with cities and towns, as well as regional transit authorities.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) adds that this response also answers a question from Hugh in the Q&A queue regarding plans to integrate train station service with RTA bus services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Richard who asks, will the Pan Am Southern track be considered an MBTA service where MBTA Communities Laws apply?

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that this is intercity passenger rail service and notes that both intercity and commuter rail are defined in federal law and are treated differently with different funding sources and different governance structures. She mentions that, as this would be a corridor for intercity passenger rail, it would not be subject to a statute that governs the MBTA Commuter Rail services.

James Mussoni asks about the local service option and if the Gardner station and tracks there would need to be upgraded, as Gardner was once part of the MBTA in the late 1900s.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that the tracks between Fitchburg and Gardner are part of the Pan Am Southern territory and that it was used with permission of the freight railroad back then. She recalls that the site of the former Gardner station may not be a good location for a station, as standards for passenger stations are now different from then.

Sidney Rothstein expresses support for the project and asks, as more study is done, what are the possibilities for expanding the analysis of economic development and including more robust measures of economic development and growth that might be spurred by the project. Sidney

also states that there may be significant differences in post-pandemic patterns that would lead to different projections.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) responds that the benefit-cost analysis is a very rigid tool and notes that the benefits depend on who the riders are, how much they are saving in travel time, and the use of a different mode of travel. He mentions Devens, Fitchburg, and Worcester as some case studies as a start to assessing what the additional elements of economic development could be.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads questions from Allen and Helen, who both ask whether combining Alternatives 3 and 4 (electrification and full local service) is a possibility.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that that is a possibility, and that as part of the systems planning phase, the alternatives can be refined where new or merged alternatives could be developed based on stakeholder engagement.

David Kechley expresses support for the Albany extension and asks, how soon can the service get started?

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) refers to the discussion about the FRA service development process. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) adds that additional planning steps could be taken and, as funding and resources to perform the work are identified, discussions with railroad partners would begin. She notes that the host railroads and Amtrak would need to be on board with the service. She mentions that these partners would then work together on further modeling of the preferred alternatives and that the permitting process would begin as part of the project design process. She states the need for additional planning in order to refine the alternatives and to start to get into project identification.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Carl, who recalls hearing that there would be an attempt to synchronize arrival in Greenfield with Amtrak's Vermonter service and asks if there is a possibility of an increase in the Valley Flyer service, especially northbound during the daytime hours.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that schedules were developed around different parts of the day, and actual schedules would be intended to coordinate service between different routes to allow people to use multiple services.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) again thanks everyone for their participation, and states that the meeting time is being extended to allow for more questions.

Myra Ross states that as a blind person, she currently has limited travel options and is supportive of this project. She adds that service from Albany to Boston through Greenfield is not fast or useful because there is so little of it and mentions the long travel time from Amherst to Boston. She encourages continuing to push for Northern Tier service and continuing to enlist the support of communities along or near the corridor.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from Dale, who asks, how do the regional planning commissions intersect with this process now and going forward, in relation to parking and coordination with regional transport.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that MassDOT has been coordinating with regional planning agencies throughout the life of the project and that would continue.

Jean and John McClellan ask if anything can be learned from Japan, Europe, and China about how to expedite the timeline of this idea.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that there may be construction methods and other insights that could be learned and points out that the processes for taking into account the interest of stakeholders differs. She adds that Europe and Japan have great high-speed rail that could be learned from technically, but for planning a railroad and beginning to construct it, there are systems in place with particular governance and funding structures.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) reads a question from John Garrett, Greenfield City Councilor, who expresses support for the project, and asks if there is a plan to electrify the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line out to Wachusett.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that the MBTA is both committed and obligated to decarbonize its system and that while the cost of MBTA electrification was not included within the Northern Tier costs, it was assumed that it would occur.

Pam Harty asks why the ridership estimates for the electrified option were double and wants to learn a bit more about why.

Paul Nelson (HNTB) clarifies that the estimated ridership is between 196,000 and 304,000. He explains the relationship between the number of stops and the estimated ridership, which is why Alternatives 3 and 4 show higher ridership, and that travel time is also a factor.

Roy Kimmel asks about if the effort would be federally funded or strictly a state funded project, and if this will occur simultaneously with the effort to improve train service from Boston to Pittsfield. Roy also asks about who would operate the Northern Tier service.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) responds that it could be a combination of federal, state, and local funding. She mentions that the operator would be Amtrak because Amtrak runs nearly all intercity passenger rail service in the United States. She also notes that both the East-West and Northern Tier rail efforts are currently progressing at the same time but are at different stages.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) asks Anna M. Barry (HNTB) to share more about Amtrak's rights of access. Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that Amtrak's enabling act gave it the right to access any railroad right-of-way in the country at a certain price level and that freight railroads and the MBTA are obligated to allow Amtrak to operate intercity passenger rail service on their rights-of-way for a negotiated cost.

Carl Sailor states that the presentation mentioned that the service is planned for five round trips per day and that Amtrak's Downeaster was referenced as an example, and asks what circumstances would cause service to be increased.

Anna M. Barry (HNTB) states that intercity rail services generally start with a smaller number of daily trips and that, while the Downeaster also began with a smaller number of trips, the five trains a day was based on a schedule to serve the types of trips that riders on the Northern Tier are likely to be taking. She mentions the stakeholder communities and funding as additional factors.

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) states that there are five minutes left in the meeting and mentions that this is not the only opportunity to submit comments and questions. She states that additional questions may be submitted via the comment form on the study website and that responses will be provided for the questions in the Q&A. She then transitions to next steps.

8. Next Steps by Makaela Niles, MassDOT (Project Manager)

Makaela Niles (MassDOT) thanks everyone for their input and states that the feedback will be used to develop recommended next steps. She states that the study process will be documented in a draft report which will be released for public review and comment and finalized in a final report. She adds that notifications will be sent out once the draft final report has been released and encourages attendees to sign up for updates if they have not done so already.

She encourages attendees to visit the website to continue the conversation, reiterates that all comments and questions will be available on the website with responses, and notes that materials from tonight's meeting will be made available on the website as well. Makaela Niles (MassDOT) wishes everyone a good rest of their evening and concludes the meeting.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Information Meeting #3 Attendees

MassDOT/Study Team:

- Makaela Niles - MassDOT
- Anna M. Barry - HNTB
- Paul Nelson - HNTB
- Sara Stoja - HNTB
- Price Armstrong - Cambridge Systematics
- Dan Tempesta - Cambridge Systematics
- Branner Stewart - UMass Donahue Institute
- Sofia Clark - HDR | City Point Partners
- Joe Sgroi - HDR | City Point Partners

Working Group Members & Alternates:

1. Jo Comerford - State Senator
2. John Barrett - State Representative
3. Ginny DeSorgher – City of Greenfield
4. Linda Dunlavy – Franklin Regional Council of Governments
5. Thomas Matuszko - Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Public Attendees:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Francis Abuisi | 35. Laura Chapdelaine |
| 2. Andrew Achenbach | 36. Julia Chevan |
| 3. Andreas Aepli | 37. Laura Christensen |
| 4. John Anhalt | 38. Bill Christian |
| 5. Deborah Arak | 39. Joe Cleary |
| 6. Jennifer Atlee | 40. Susan Cloutier |
| 7. Robert Baker-White | 41. Stuart Cohen |
| 8. Trenton Barnes | 42. Shannon Collins |
| 9. Keith Barnicle | 43. Ben Comeau |
| 10. Daniel Barowy | 44. John Compton |
| 11. Zach Bauer | 45. Tracy Compton |
| 12. Karen Benko | 46. Paula Consolini |
| 13. Freda Bennett | 47. Donna Consolini |
| 14. Joe Bergeron | 48. Gildo Consolini |
| 15. Tom Bernard | 49. Matthew Cooperman |
| 16. Mell Bissell | 50. Christine Copeland |
| 17. Brad Bissell | 51. Jared Cowing |
| 18. Julia Blyth | 52. Gregory Cox |
| 19. Alice Bojanowski | 53. Melissa Cragg |
| 20. Christopher Bolton | 54. Bette Craig |
| 21. Laura Botkin | 55. Anne Crider |
| 22. Stephanie Boyd | 56. Janet Curran |
| 23. Colin Bratton | 57. Maeve Curtin |
| 24. ralph Brill | 58. Mike Curtin |
| 25. Karuna Burgess | 59. Zoe Danger |
| 26. Harold Burnett | 60. Tammy Daniels |
| 27. Deborah Burns | 61. Drew David |
| 28. Fanely Caba | 62. Karen K Davis |
| 29. Rauley Caine | 63. j Deery |
| 30. Mary Carey | 64. brie Della Rocca |
| 31. Beth Carlisle | 65. CM Deucher |
| 32. Barbara Carr | 66. Ellie Deveau |
| 33. Charles Chandler | 67. David Dewey |
| 34. claire chang | 68. Armando DiCianno |

69. Matthew DiGennaro	114. Helen Harrison
70. Jessica Dils	115. Liz Hartung
71. Dina Dommett	116. Pam Harty
72. Pam Dorwin	117. Donna Haskins
73. Anne Doyle	118. Laurie Heatherington
74. Abigail Drury	119. Ben Heckscher
75. Stephanie Duclos	120. Geoffrey Hedden
76. Patricia Duffy	121. Kate Heekin
77. Colleen DuroShea	122. Gretchen Heinle
78. Martha DuroShea	123. Robert heller
79. Kenneth Dymond	124. Fred Heyes
80. Holly Edwards	125. Ziporah Hildebrandt
81. Morgan Everett	126. Edward Hines
82. Pete Farwell	127. Cecilia Hirsch
83. Tim Faselst	128. Jennifer Howard
84. Michelle Faselst	129. Brij Howard-Sarin
85. Lynne Feldman	130. roger hoyt
86. Jill Fenner	131. Wendy Hudson
87. Stephen Ferguson	132. rebecca hull
88. Andrew Fitch	133. Tom Hutcheson
89. Kay Flatten	134. Brian Intraversato
90. Antonia Foias	135. John Ireland
91. Lucia Foley	136. Amy Johns
92. Leo Franceschi	137. Oliver Jones
93. Claudia Frigeri	138. David Kechley
94. Susan Galereave	139. Halley Kelly
95. Sarah Gardner	140. roy kimmel
96. John Garrett	141. Cathleen King
97. Lynda Geraci	142. Susan Kohut
98. Elizabeth Giannini	143. Jim Kolesar
99. Jaye Glenn	144. Alison Kolesar
100. Laurie Glover	145. William Kolis
101. david grace	146. Surya Kotapati
102. Virginia Grant	147. Matti Kovler
103. Thomas Green	148. Cathy Kristofferson
104. Dan Greenberg	149. Joe Kurland
105. David Greenberg	150. Kenneth Kuttner
106. Carrie Greene	151. Larry Kuttner
107. Janet Gross	152. Dale LaBonte
108. Nancy Grossman	153. Marcel LaFlamme
109. Susanne Hale	154. Benjamin Lamb
110. Katherine Hand	155. Chris Larabee
111. Martha Hanner	156. Leah Larkey
112. Elaine Hantman	157. Pat Larson
113. Jacob Harrington	158. Richard LaVigne Sr

159.	Renee Lazaras	204.	Barbara Pearson
160.	Joan Levy	205.	Julia Pedroni
161.	Kerry Li	206.	Peter Pedroni
162.	Paul Lipke	207.	John Pelletier
163.	Zuri Mabrey-Wakefield	208.	Tim Petersen
164.	Molly Magavern	209.	Sally Petersen
165.	Jim Mahon	210.	Mary Peterson
166.	John Maloney	211.	Joann Phelan
167.	Sarah Manley	212.	Judith Phillips
168.	Gerald Marcanio	213.	Fiona Picone
169.	Christopher Marcisz	214.	Shelley Pierce
170.	MaryDelia Marshall	215.	Carson Poe
171.	Richard Martin	216.	Allen Pope
172.	David Martin	217.	Emily Power
173.	Martha Marvin	218.	Pam Predmore
174.	Andrea Massar	219.	Read Predmore
175.	Hilary Matheson	220.	Max Prum
176.	Jean and John McClellan	221.	Kali Puppolo
177.	Teresa McHugh	222.	Christa Pylant
178.	philip mcknight	223.	Hugh Pyle
179.	Kathleen McKnight	224.	Tim Pyper
180.	Peter Mehlin	225.	Mikael Pyrtel
181.	Rosemarie Meissner	226.	William Quale
182.	Arthur Millet	227.	Leo Quigley
183.	Susan Milliken-Rogers	228.	Jay Racela
184.	Quincy Morgan	229.	daniel racicot
185.	Ronan Murphy	230.	Danielle Ramdath
186.	James Mussoni	231.	Aimee Reische
187.	Diane Nassif	232.	todd reynolds
188.	Dawn Nelson	233.	Kate Richardson
189.	Carolyn Ness	234.	Clint Richmond
190.	Dawn Nims	235.	Paul Richmond
191.	David Nixon	236.	Molly Rideout
192.	Adrienne Nunez	237.	John Ridgway
193.	Anne O'Connor	238.	Donna Riggs
194.	Gregory Olchowski	239.	Sarah Robertson
195.	Martin Omasta	240.	Steven Rockwood
196.	Marilyn O'Neil	241.	Dana Roscoe
197.	Patricia O'Neill	242.	Myra Ross
198.	James Paleologopoulos	243.	Sidney Rothstein
199.	Barbara Palmer	244.	Joanna Rueter
200.	Betul Pamuk	245.	Carl Sailor
201.	David Paquette	246.	Mario Sassi
202.	Christopher Parker	247.	Renee Schiek
203.	Dan Peacock	248.	laura schoenbaum

249.	Shaun Schofield	283.	S. Vaithee Swaran
250.	Mawusi Sefogbe	284.	Debra Van Deusen
251.	Christine Seibert	285.	Robert Van Deusen
252.	Sara Seinberg	286.	Matthew VanHeynigen
253.	Carolyn Sellars	287.	Sarah Vega-Liros
254.	Ashley Shade	288.	Lee Venolia
255.	Christopher Silvia	289.	Carrie Waara
256.	Anne Skinner	290.	David Wagner
257.	Andrew Smith	291.	Kara Walsh
258.	Tom Smith	292.	Stephen Warley
259.	Elizabeth Smith	293.	Jennifer West
260.	David Smythe	294.	Kaatje White
261.	Amy Sosne	295.	Rob White
262.	Ben Sosne	296.	Gareth Williams
263.	Dorothea Sotiros	297.	Kira Williams
264.	Laini Sporbert	298.	Luke Williamson
265.	Donald Sprague	299.	karin winter
266.	James Starkey	300.	Chris Winters
267.	Lauren Stevens	301.	Alan Wolf
268.	Suzanne Stinson	302.	Peggy Wolff
269.	Kennedy Strakose-Griffin	303.	Tom Wolff
270.	Lenore Styler	304.	Lora Wondolowski
271.	Mallory Sullivan	305.	Scott Wrigley
272.	Linda Sweeney	306.	Caleb Wursten
273.	Jennifer Swoap	307.	Elaine Yanow
274.	Desiree Taylor	308.	Li Yu
275.	Jane Tekin	309.	Mark Zaccheo
276.	Audrey Thier	310.	Chelsea Zhang
277.	Sean Thomas	311.	Wendy Zunitch
278.	Laurie Thomsen	312.	Zoom User
279.	Peter Thomsen	313.	Zoom User via Phone 1
280.	Claire Ting	314.	Zoom User via Phone 2
281.	Eva Tracy-Raeder	315.	Zoom User via Phone 3
282.	carolyn umlauf		

Appendix A – Additional Public Comments Received

Question	Asker Name	Answer
Hi, will we be able to receive this slide deck of very helpful information? Thank You!	David Dewey	Hi David, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study
I just wanted to mention that some people who wanted to be on this call unfortunately are not because of Maundy Thursday services. Thanks	Jim Mahon	Thank you, Jim.
I apologize if this has been discussed and I missed it. Are there analogous plans being developed for Springfield (or Worcester) to Boston (or is there no track available to work with)? If they are conceivable, how do they compare for financial feasibility?	Barbara Pearson	Hi Barbara, the East-West Passenger Rail Study assessed rail service alternatives along the Boston-Worcester-Springfield-Pittsfield corridor. For more information, please visit: https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study
Was their a choice of metrics for the benefit cost analysis or is it federally mandated? If it's not mandated why not include the impact on individual's health from driving? Not to mention the fact of climate change and it's devastating impact on the economy of places vulnerable to climate change?	John Garrett	The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs
there*	John Garrett	
Given the scarcity of public transportation options in western MA, would it be possible that the estimated real estate value increases extend over a greater geography than “normal?” Greatly appreciate this presentation, thank you.	Suzanne Stinson	As part of the alternatives development and analysis, catchment areas around potential stations were developed to assess trip-making and estimate ridership and related analyses.
Would there be a westbound train? I read that they want to do 5 eastbound trains a day, but what about Westbound trains?	j Deery	Hi j, yes westbound movements for trains would occur.
As a former school committee member during a time of declining enrollment, I	Joe Kurland	Thank you for your comments, Joe.

see an increase in population as a boost to our schools. It would improve the cost per student numbers.		
The frequency of ice storms (vs. snow storms) has increased dramatically in the past few years as our climate changes within the northern tier towns. Do ice storms impact the Electric Service #3 Alternative more than the non-electric alternatives?	CM Deucher	Please note that Alternative 3 includes electrification elements, including overhead catenary.
Hi, thanks for all this! I wondered about the VMT modelling. In northern Berkshire County and in Franklin County, many people going to the Boston metro area do not take Route 2--they go down to MassPike and then turn east. Any surveys out there on this?	Jim Mahon	Please see the Public Meeting #1 presentation for information on North Adams to Boston route choice.
For the link option, is the existing MBTA schedule expected to absorb the additional riders arriving from the west for the transfer, or will additional MBTA capacity need to be considered to accommodate through passengers all the way to Boston?	Zoe Danger	Alternative 6 (the Northern Tier Rail Link) assumes the existing MBTA schedule for connection at Fitchburg.
Thanks for all your great work on this project so far! Can you share how your report will assess the potential “economic, employment, social and cultural benefits to Franklin and Berkshire Counties and the commonwealth as a whole” beyond the construction and property value impacts?	Paula Consolini	Please see the Public Meeting #3 presentation on slide 18 for estimated economic and employment information. As part of the alternatives development and analysis, attractors were identified and all alternatives were estimated to provide connectivity, mobility, and choice. The study’s report will document the study process, including the alternatives evaluation analyses.
P.S. I was quoting item viii in the legislative mandate for the study.	Paula Consolini	
I hope this can become reality, and I hope the Plan #3 Electrified rail is the one chosen. I have lived in Petersham, near Athol and Gardner for 46 years and in the beginning there was some	Karen K Davis	Thank you for your comments, Karen.

<p>rail service from Athol/Gardner and it so sad to see it go. I think this area needs this rural development/transportation. Our area had the 5 or 6 Quabbin towns that were flooded to create the Quabbin reservoir , and now these rural communities that are left deserve some resources. PLEASE DO THIS</p> <p>KarenDavis</p>		
<p>Just a comment: I work at Williams College (and worked at MCLA for 11 years) and don't have a handle on ridership numbers, but this would be so beneficial to our students from the greater Boston area. Very excited to track the progress of this project (pun intended).</p>	Kate Heekin	<p>Thank you for your comments, Kate.</p>
<p>Any chance u could please go over again the overall economic impact ? i thought i saw on the chart that across the board it was negative ?</p>	Marilyn O'Neil	<p>Please see the Public Meeting #3 presentation for evaluation summary, benefit-cost analysis, and additional information.</p>
<p>are copies of this presentation available</p>	Francis Abuisi	<p>Hi Francis, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study</p>
<p>Does the negative Benefit-Cost ratio suggest a low likelihood of implementation?</p> <p>The slide suggested none of the alternatives would be competitive for "discretionary grants under current federal rules."</p>	Caleb Wursten	<p>Regarding the benefit-cost ratio, changes to the project's characteristics, conceptual costs, and benefits may impact the benefit-cost analysis. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.</p>
<p>Would there be a westbound train? I read that they want to do 5 eastbound trains a day, but what about Westbound trains?</p>	j Deery	<p>Hi j, yes. Westbound train movements would occur.</p>
<p>Does "5 trains daily" mean 5 trains each way or 2 trains one way and three trains the other way?</p>	Robert heller	<p>The proposed alternatives each were developed to provide five round-trips.</p>

Comment (no reply necessary): I am very impressed with the thoughtful and well informed professionalism behind these studies, and I am grateful for this public presentation. Any of options 2-5 would be wonderful (#1 and #6 would not merit the money or effort). I strongly support this important initiative to bring passenger rail to the North Adams-Boston corridor. Thank you.	David Wagner	Thank you for your comments, David.
Do you have an energy use estimate with each alternative?	Patricia O'Neill	An assessment of estimated energy use could potentially be examined as part of this or any future planning activities.
Also, appreciate the analysis that the addition of rail may lead to an increase in population instead of decline in Western MA. This is a really important point.	Lora Wondolowski	Thank you, Lora.
I don't have a question, but I wanted to express my strong support for this project. I don't think the extension to Albany makes sense at this point. But Alternatives 3 and 4 seem the best from the perspective of a resident in Williamstown, MA.	Antonia Foias	Thank you, Antonia
Did the build/operation costs for Alternative 3 (electrified) only evaluate adding overhead catenary on the existing freight right of way or was a sub alternative explored for electrifying the vehicles themselves instead? Hydrogen fuel cell trainsets (currently built in America) can offer zero emission transit with the needed range without the large upfront capital required -- was that option evaluated as part an "electrified" alternative?	Rauley Caine	Rolling stock costs associated with overhead electrification were estimated.
Discount at 7% for East-West vs 3% for Northern Tier?	Leo Quigley	The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs. Please note that carbon dioxide

		emissions is the only metric discounted at the 3% rate.
Thank you for this careful work. I'm confident that my household in Williamstown would make use of this service.	Jim Kolesar	Thank you, Jim.
I think this service is a huge improvement to all the communities this serves! Also I think more local government advocacy for the rail service would help gain community support for the implementation as well. In addition what is the time line for the implementation of the rail service.	Matthew DiGennaro	Thank you, Matthew.
What kind of improvements (if any) would need to be done at North Station in Boston in order to accomodate the new trains on this route?	Ben Comeau	The alternatives assumed no modification to MBTA infrastructure.
Can you clarify how tourism (either westward bound or eastward bound) is or isn't included in the estimated possible ridership in the different alternatives?	Molly Rideout	One of the objectives of the study was to improve connectivity and access to destinations (e.g., jobs and services, academic institutions, tourist attractions, etc.). As part of the alternatives development and analysis, attractors were identified and catchment areas around potential stations were developed.
Can you describe where the layover in North Adams would be and how large the yard would be?	Leo Quigley	Considerations related to a potential layover facility are included in the Public Workshop presentation on slide 56.
We are certainly in favor of Northern Tier Rail and its potential to support population growth in our smaller towns and its potential positive impact on our travel and tourism industries, as mentioned in the state's Economic Development Strategy. -Mikael M. Pyrtel, Director of Economic Development, Town of Orange, MA	Mikael Pyrtel	Thank you, Mikael.

As someone who lives in Williamstown, I echo those sentiments (including the stop in Williamstown!). Between tourism & higher education, there is a high level of interest in having train service to our region. Service from Boston with the Albany extension would be incredible. I strongly support the electric option (3, I believe) for the environmental and health benefits.	Christine Seibert	Thank you, Christine.
Following up on the question from the official from Acton, we should be aware of the new Amtrak standard locomotives known as the Siemens Charger, which are dual mode with both diesel and electric motive power.	Clint Richmond	Thank you for your comment, Clint.
YES to the Williamstown stop! It would also connect folks all along the route to the Clark art museum, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Peter Pan bus to NYC.	Kate Richardson	Thank you, Kate.
I fully support this project and look forward to taking the first train from North Adams to Boston.	Ashley Shade	Thank you for your support.
The Williamstown Stop would also connect folks from Southern Vermont via the Green Mountain Express bus service, which terminates in Williamstown	Kate Richardson	Thank you, Kate.
Is there a publically accessible, on-line location to view the information/data underlying the conclusions set forth in the charts displayed this evening?	William Kolis	Please see the Public Meeting #1 and Public Meeting #2 presentations for additional information. The study's report will document the study process, including the alternatives evaluation analyses.
I want to echo what others have said about how incredibly valuable this service would be to our rural communities allowing for increased business, recreation, and population. Also connecting the East and West could have such a profound impact on the state.	Patricia Duffy	Thank you, Patricia.

We are very supportive adding as many rail stops as possible in the corridor. We see having rail service as opening up the region to greater economic and population growth, and connecting the recreation opportunities to other parts of the state.	Sarah Vega-Liros	Thank you, Sarah.
Since the benefit cost ratio is low, I wondered if you looked at the expense and ridership of simply extending the Fitchburg line to Athol 5 times a day and to extend new trips from north Adam's and Greenfield to Springfield and Boston on lines with infrastructure already upgrades already underway	Christopher Parker	Regarding the benefit-cost ratio, changes to the project's characteristics, conceptual costs, and benefits may impact the benefit-cost analysis. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.
Could you share on Zoom the slide with the "scoring" of the alternatives again?	Suzanne Stinson	Hi Suzanne, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study .
I'd be thrilled if I could take my bike on a train out to the Berkshires and then bicycle back to Colrain.	David Greenberg	Thank you, David.
As another Williamstown resident, I also wanted to express my support for this project. I travel to Boston several times a month, and I am sure that not only will I use this service, but many of my neighbors will as well.	Elaine Hantman	Thank you, Elaine.
I just want to build one what others have said, this sounds like an awesome project! It will help communitys that are dieing to get new life! As a railfan myslef, this would be awesome to watch this line get more life!	j Deery	Thank you, j.
It seems unlikely the ridership/cost of construction analysis will support or justify the actual construction of passenger rail service to North Adams. Having said that as a business person in Berkshire County, I look at this	William Kolis	Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.

project as an economic development opportunity. So, what can local businesses do to make known their thoughts on the economic importance of this project to the Berkshire Region?		
Another Williamstown resident in favor of this idea. Thanks!	MaryDelia Marshall	Thank you, MaryDelia.
I was late. Are the slides posted anywhere?	John Anhalt	Hi John, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video recording) will be available on the study website: https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study
According to the analysis I did, it would be faster to get to Boston from North Adams and Greenfield by going down to Springfield and East through Worcester to South Station	Christopher Parker	Please see the Public Meeting #1 presentation for information on North Adams to Boston route choice and average travel times.
As someone planning to move to Williamstown later this year, having a train service connecting Albany to Boston passing by our town really excites me. I really hope this project moves forward rapidly!	Betul Pamuk	Thank you, Betul.
Was there any thought about double-tracking the whole route?	John Ridgway	The study alternatives developed aimed to minimize or avoid impacts by remaining within the existing right-of-way.
There are dual mode — electric/diesel locomotives to use if the MBTA electrifies before the western sections.	Joe Kurland	Thank you for your comment, Joe.
As a Western Mass resident, I would absolutely love to see both the Northern Tier and the southern West-East rail created, with north-south connections, such as the Amtrak line between Brattleboro and New Haven. It would be a dream come true. I strongly support the enhanced local service to increase ridership and usefulness, and electrification. There are grants such as the CPRG that could be applied. We're moving in the	Helen Harrison	Thank you, Helen.

direction of electrification generally, and this would make the most sense for our climate and for forward-thinking infrastructure that aligns with our statewide renewable energy goals.		
5 trains a day in both directions? Or just in one way?	j Deery	Hi j. Both Eastbound and Westbound train movements would occur.
Many thanks to all involved in tonight's presentation. Another Williamstown resident expressing support for this project.	Hugh Pyle	Thank you, Hugh.
did the study consider making an offer to acquire the right-of-way from current owners? the budget for track upgrades is approaching the \$600M pricetag for the acquisition of Pan Am Railways, which includes other rights of way	Christopher Silvia	Please note that freight service would still continue to share tracks with passenger service regardless of ownership.
Given that there are a number of political leaders from Western Mass present, I would like to ask them if there are any plans to densify the areas around the new stations to increase walkability?	Carl Sailor	Please connect with community leaders for additional information.
I want to second those who have called for more stations, especially stations near recreational area. could this study include seasonal stations similar to the Amtrak downeaster old orchard Beach station?	Christopher Silvia	Service to additional markets may be potentially considered or explored in a future effort.
Please can you find out how the values of the health/environmental health cost benefits of electrification are calculated in the federal 'black box', and share them with us all?	Paul Lipke	The benefit-cost analysis methodology comes from the USDOT Benefit-Cost Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs
This would be a game-changer for Western Mass. What a vision. Thank you for your hard work in analyzing the options and explaining them so clearly.	Chris Winters	Thank you, Chris.
thanks for the presentation. If travel time from Grennfiefl to N station was no more than two hours, I would never drive to Boston again. even	roy kimmel	Thank you for your comments, Roy.

allowing for an additional 45 minutes to drive and park in Greenfield.		
As a member of our town Finance Committee, I know we continue to struggle to diversify our local tax base, and I would think that this project could be a very significant support to that. This would open up employment opportunities, particularly hybrid work opportunities, both retaining and attracting people to our community. How can we help and advocate further for this?	Suzanne Stinson	Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.
Will the track upgrades and construction require Eminent Domain to the thousands of homes stretching from Pittsfield to Greenfield to Leominster to Boston? And if not, then how can you possibly pull this huge rail infrastructure project off..?	Sean Thomas	The study alternatives developed aimed to minimize or avoid impacts by remaining within the existing right-of-way.
As a resident of North Adams, I feel this project would be hugely beneficial for the Berkshires, and the state in general. A North Adams or Williamstown stop would be particularly welcome. Train access to western Mass could help to alleviate high housing costs in Boston, as it would become possible to move further out from the city for daily commuters, especially those who work on a hybrid from home/in office schedule. A scenario similar to commuters taking Amtrak from NJ to NYC on a daily basis is not unimaginable. Further, a professor at Williams College, I would use the train to take my students to the major art museums in Boston for teaching purposes. I attended grad school in Boston and it is probable that educators there would	Trenton Barnes	Thank you for your comments, Trenton.

use the train similarly, to bring students to view Mass MoCA and the Clark Art Institute. There are many similar opportunities for cultural and educational enrichment that may pertain to other fields.		
It's so nice seeing all of the people on here, advocating for Western, MA. Let's keep advocating for this project!	Andrew Fitch	Thank you for your support.
I hope thatt this project goes forward with a stop in Athol. It will be exciting to have train service along the Northern Tier Pat Larson in Orange.	Pat Larson	Thank you for your comment, Pat.
Speaking of stations, what is the plan for Greenfield where the current Amtrak platform serves only the north-south track with no access to the east-west track? The original Greenfield station used to be between those two tracks.	Joe Kurland	The study alternatives include proposed improvements, such as a new platform and reconfiguration of Greenfield Station.
Given the timeline you provided and the current stage of the project, what is the earliest projected year of the rail's availability?	Carrie Greene	A sample implementation timeline is included in the Public Meeting #3 presentation on slide 35. Evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies is included as part of the draft recommended next steps.
Thank you so much for your hard work! We live in Greenfield and have a child who goes to school in Boston. She takes the train to Wachusett and we drive to pick her up when she wants to come home and do the reverse to send her back to school. A 2 hour train ride to Greenfield would be amazing, and many other families would benefit as well!	Shannon Collins	Thank you for your comments, Shannon.
As a resident of Berkshire County, I fully support this project! Thank you all for your planning and work on this.	Wendy Zunitich	Thank you for your comments, Wendy.
Just a reminder.... The residents in South Florida never thought "regular" people would ride the train. Please note that Brightline (public/private)	Alice Bojanowski	Thank you, Alice.

goes between Miami and Orlando very successfully!! Thank you.		
Big Thank You to Paul for his thoughtful and detailed answers to the questions regarding the obvious need for a broader economic development benefit analysis beyond the project construction period benefits and the relatively narrow federal BCA guidelines. I would recommend MassDOT look at the public 2005 and 2023 Maine DOT economic benefit reports relating to the Downeaster Amtrak line that runs from Maine into Boston North Station and is coincidentally the same length of rail line as NTIER. Many thanks again to MassDOT and their team for this call. - Tom Green, Williamstown	Thomas Green	Thank you for your comments, Thomas.
How will colleges and universities along the corridor be engaged with to better understand the demands as noted in next steps?	Matthew VanHeynigen	Stakeholders, including colleges and universities, would continue to be engaged as part of any future efforts.
Fabulous work; thank you so much for all your hard work. I would love to see this project go forward. I sometimes drive to Wachusett to catch the commuter rail, but it would be much easier to catch a train from Greenfield.	Nancy Grossman	Thank you for your comments, Nancy.
What are the next steps specifically in terms of state government approval? Is another bill going to be needed to be passed on Beacon Hill to get the new rail link authorized?	Halley Kelly	The draft recommendations aim to continue advancing the remaining conceptual planning phase for this effort. Following the completion of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, the final report will be filed with the clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means and the Joint Committee on Transportation.
There are no materials for today on the website except a flyer. Could you please post the slide deck. Thanks.	John Anhalt	Hi John, materials from this meeting (including the presentation and video

		recording) will be available on the study website: https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study
No response required. I just want to thank you, all, for this excellent presentation and all of your hard work. Also, and this is just a small thing, but how cool would it be to once again travel by train through the Hoosac Tunnel!	Stephen Ferguson	Thank you, Stephen.
Thank you all for the presentation, questions, research and offering of information. The meeting is informative. The folks who have presented have been helpful. Makaela has been a delightful host.	Karuna Burgess	Thank you, Karuna.
<p>This is VERY exciting! Another resident of Montague Center echoing the many comments on the game changing value of this rail to our area! Also have a strong preference for a new electric full local option (3+4). Also seconding Marcel LaFlamme's questions/concerns regarding how we could have BOTH a Springfield centered path and a Northern path along Route 2. Our family's sense is that people will make use of whatever is available, but if you build both paths there's potential for MUCH more dramatic uptake meeting the needs of our diverse rural and urban populations – we're curious to what extent ridership estimates and surveys account for what happens when the convenience goes WAY up (with connections between other services, more frequent trips etc, addressing last mile issues etc).</p> <p>A separate concern - I do wonder about the impact of increased housing prices on existing residents in Western MA and how that could be considered</p>	Jennifer Atlee	Thank you for your comments, Jennifer.

and ameliorated (curious with regard to both Northern path and Compass rail)		
I echo all the thank yous, and absolutely, would use this service a few times a month for sure, from North Adams or Williamstown! Please let us know how we can help advocate for making this become reality!	Kenneth Kuttner	Thank you, Kenneth.
Thank you for a very informative presentation and process, which has been much improved from the initial planning of the Pittsfield to Boston route. As a western MA resident, it seems important to plan for north/south connections between the two lines, which would greatly increase their usefulness. Many local residents want to travel within this region, and not necessarily to Boston, and consideration of that perspective isn't always mentioned. Thank you!	Lucia Foley	Thank you for your comments, Lucia.
Thank you all so much for this forum and your work. When I see the bottom line on the chart for funding registering in the negative area, I wonder what can citizens do to help push the project forward despite the numbers coming up in the red? We all know that the almighty dollar speaks much louder than people who are struggling with transportation, I have hope that this could be overcome, and would value your guidance on what you've seen communities do to secure funding despite these kinds of charts.	Sara Seinberg	Related to advocacy, please connect with your community leaders and elected officials regarding this effort.
I share the view of others that this would be a game changer for western Massachusetts while supporting more sustainable economic development and higher quality of life in the metro Boston area. Thank you for your thorough work and for taking the extra	Paula Consolini	Thank you for your comments, Paula.

time tonight to bring people up to speed!		
I do not have a question but wanted to add another political /economic reason for strong support of the Northern Tier. In Williamstown (where I live) and the rest of Northern Berkshire County, we often feel disconnected and cut off from Boston and the eastern part of the state by the Hoosac Range. As a result, we turn to Albany for news and media, medical care, entertainment, jobs, and transportation hubs. Many of us know the NY governor's voice better than our own governor's voice. With passenger rail service to Boston (which we had in my childhood), our attention and loyalties would shift toward our own state capitol and our state would be much better knit together.	Deborah Burns	Thank you for your comments, Deborah.
I am highly concerned about our ability to be resilient in the coming decades with the onset of ecological collapse, minerals scarcity (certainly it is impossible to transition our entire energy use to renewables/rebuildables at our current scale) and increased likelihood of supply chain breakdown because of these constraints. I hope that beyond economic growth, there can also be some visioning of what responsible planned degrowth looks like in our communities and how that might interact with transportation — even just as a contingency.	Patricia O'Neill	Thank you for your comments, Patricia.
Speaking from Greenfield, there's tremendous support for west-east rail in western MA for so many reasons. Thank you for your hard work.	Christa Pylant	Thank you for your comments, Christa.
Thank you all.	Joe Kurland	Thank you for attending, Joe.

MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary

Project Name: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Description: Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Comment 1

Name: Megan Randall

Date: 09/13/2021

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Dear Ms. Niles, Having just belatedly read the Berkshire Eagle article on the northern tier passenger rail study, I would like to know when and where public meetings are scheduled. I am a southern VT resident who sits on the Planning Commission of Pownal, VT. I'm interested in carbon savings and bringing vitality back to small towns like ours, and believe passenger rail service would work toward both goals. Would it be timely to push the Planning Commission or Select Board to show support for this initiative? Has the Covid surge put a stop to public meetings, or will you proceed via Zoom? Thank you for including VT in this process. Megan Randall Pownal Planning Commission

MassDOT Response

Good morning Megan, Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The first meeting of the study is anticipated to be held later this year. A study website will be established at the onset of the process that will host meeting information, including meeting dates, times, and platforms/venues. Best, Makaela

Comment 2

Name: Quincy Morgan

Date: 11/19/2021

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

Hello, I am writing in support of the recently-launched Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. My immediate family and I live around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but we frequently visit

relatives in Winchendon, Athol, and Templeton, Massachusetts. While the drive is long, tiring, and stressful, driving is often the only reasonable travel option due to a lack of rail in the region. While I have considered moving to Winchendon myself, and maybe starting a business there, as a young professional I am concerned about access to Boston, New York, and the rest of the Northeast. I strongly support new passenger rail across the northern tier and urge MassDOT to ensure the service is time-competitive with driving, runs frequently throughout the day, and has timed connections at Greenfield and Boston. Also, please consider a station in Baldwinville as a gateway to Winchendon (in addition to stops in Gardner and Athol). I would be happy to participate however possible as the study continues. Thanks!

Comment 3

Name: Flavia Mastellone
Date: 12/13/2021
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Since I'm getting older, soon to be 68, and not in the best of health, driving to Boston from the Berkshires is more daunting to contemplate. If there were a passenger train, I'm sure I would have occasion to take it, particularly if I want to fly out of Boston.

MassDOT Response

We appreciate your interest in the study and thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the Study process.

Comment 4

Name: Rauley Caine
Date: 12/13/2021
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Any potential service from BOS to N. Adams must be coordinated with the regional transit authorities so that they can plan and fund bus services that meet trains at stations/satisfy train customer first-last mile travel needs. This service will be most successful when there is a strong system of bus routes to act as a feeder network to new stations. BRTA in North Adams and FRTA in Greenfield should be priority for new bus service funding as part of this

program; seeing as MART in Fitchburg and LRTA in Lowell-area are already well serviced by regular MBTA commuter rail, those systems should have lower priority for any new bus service funding related to new train services. Any study of new rail service should always include a study of how customers will travel first-last mile both to/from new stations and their new train services. Regional Transit Authorities MUST be included in that discussion as a first priority, but better yet, and as an equal partner.

Comment 5

Name: Jack Dunk
Date: 12/16/2021
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Extend the Fitchburg line to south ashburnham ma

MassDOT Response

We appreciate your interest in the study and thank you for your comment. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is a conceptual planning effort that will assess the feasibility of restored rail service along the North Adams-Greenfield-Boston corridor. Potential stops will be identified and evaluated as part of the study process.

Comment 6

Name: Jack Dunk
Date: 12/16/2021
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Extend the Fitchburg line to Greenfield ma

Comment 7

Name: Beverly Duncan
Date: 12/20/2021

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I have recently heard of the proposal to study the reinstatement of rail service east to west and back. I support the possibility of this service! The tracks are already in place. Please look upon this endeavor as worthy of moving the whole state into the 21st, and beyond, century.

I would use this service, occasionally for work, but also for personal reasons. What a relief to be able to use a mass transportation service that will move the state toward sustainability. Put our taxes to such programs, now!

Thank you for considering such a forward-thinking project.

Comment 8

Name: Bren Read

Date: 12/27/2021

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

The ex-B&M route being studied has considerable commuter, recreational, and intercity travel potential. Could the scope include: 1. Accounting for the post-COVID-19 pandemic New Normal of individuals moving to desirable less costly rural areas/small cities where they work from home but travel to their offices or for meetings/events. The beauty of the region and the communities on this corridor lend themselves to this new work pattern. Train travel permits safe, convenient access, along with an environment where one can work enroute. 2. Bicycles/ebikes as the New Mobility. They provide essential first/last mile mobility for work, visits, and recreational trips. Trains have the ability to easily and safely carry bikes/ebikes onboard with their users. Could well-marketed accommodation of them draw additional ridership and revenues? 3. A blended service pattern of at least two trains each way: inbound morning Boston train/afternoon return and outbound from Boston to northwestern Massachusetts in the morning, returning in the late afternoon. 4. Opportunities to develop ridership/revenues through expanding the reach of the service with other states/partners. Examples include: (a) Brattleboro-White River Jct./Hanover-Burlington area-Montreal by connecting with The Vermonter, planned extension to Montreal. There also has been suggestions to restore the overnight New York-Montreal train, following the recent return of overnight rail travel in Europe. The ex-B&M main line offers a shorter, faster, alternative than

the ex-B&A through Springfield for Boston-Montreal service, given the longstanding disinterest by the State of New Hampshire in restoring the direct route through Concord, NH. (b) Potential service to Rutland via Bellows Falls. (c) Connection/terminus at Schenectady for Amtrak connections to western New York, Toronto (when resumed), Chicago, Plattsburgh, and Montreal (also when resumed) (d) Connection/terminus alternative at Albany/Rensselaer by way of North Adams and Pittsfield for Amtrak connections also to New York City as well as to western New York, Toronto, Chicago, Plattsburgh, and Montreal. (e) Amtrak Thruway/local partner buses to Pittsfield, also Bennington, VT, Keene, NH.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comments. All public feedback will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please see below for specific responses to your comments.

1. We plan to evaluate new and potential travel markets and patterns, including those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. We plan to develop six service alternatives and evaluate them for factors that include multimodal connections.
3. We will look at a variety of service patterns in the development of the six alternatives to determine which will serve the goals and objectives of the study.
4. In Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct a study of the feasibility of rail access between North Adams and Boston; potential multimodal connections will be factors in the development and analysis of the service alternatives.

Comment 9

Name:	Elizabeth Faxon
Date:	01/27/2022
Response Requested:	Do not send me a response
Comment:	N/A

Comment 10

Name:	Valerie Shields
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Date: 02/05/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

How can MA consider North Adams and Greenfield cities when there is no adequate northern or east-west train transportation linking these cities nor enabling tourism via the nearest major airports in Boston or Albany? For northwest residents and city-dwelling visitors who increasingly do not buy, rent or hire a car for environmental and/or economic reasons, there is no convenient and reliable way to travel north, east or west from even Pittsfield where the closest Amtrak operates. Merely funding infrastructure improvements even further south in Springfield ignores this major obstacle to regional equity, while the northern cities and towns feature an increasing number of tourism magnets and opportunities to rehab sustainable housing or commercial locations to improve quality of life.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comments. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is a conceptual planning study that will evaluate the feasibility of passenger rail service between North Adams, Greenfield, and Boston. In addition to this study, other efforts including (but not limited to) the East-West Passenger Rail Study and the Berkshire Flyer aim to increase transportation options, support economic development and reduce emissions, among other goals.

Comment 11

Name: Drew David
Date: 02/18/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This project sounds great! Linking our communities by rail will give them better economic prospects and help combat climate change.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process.

Comment 12

Name: Jens Michaelson
Date: 02/22/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Good Evening, I'm writing because this topic has been of special interest to me for quite some time. I believe that a highly successful rail corridor is crucial to our society. Further, I think that successful implementation has the potential to improve the Bay State's infrastructure beyond any competition if implemented properly. To that end, my suggestion requires multiple disciplines but is not overly complicated. It is in my opinion that taxpayers may disagree with the concept of a rail corridor. It is also in my opinion that the reason it has not yet been built is because the benefits do not overly outweigh the costs. However, I think in order to lower the costs we should recognize that we can improve on existing rail infrastructure through a few different mechanisms. First, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). This doesn't seem all that revolutionary, but perhaps the implementation could be. Think: with Tesla's driving themselves down the Masspike and soon to be semi-trucks, couldn't we offer a safer alternative? That safer alternative could be a rail project that allows for Artificial Intelligence to route deliveries and/or the passenger cars appropriately with switching stations at designed intermediary points. Companies like Amazon could save on truckers, improve their status as defenders of the environment through electric rail, and also provide needed funds to make this investment palatable to taxpayers. My personal vision involves doing this on a more massive scale (for the same reasons, but also including things like insurance/accident reduction and reduced need for traffic patrols, reduction in maintenance costs- the list goes on and on), so I feel like using this as a starting point could really set the tone for the future of transportation. Next, a requirement that the project be built in conjunction with other critical infrastructure projects. Other infrastructure, such as electrical, fiber optic, or natural gas, could be on the same right-of-way, and ideally result in economies of scale for both the permitting and construction processes. This could be done through recognizing projects that exist (for example) with the ISO New England Regional System Plan, which outlines projects on the electric grid for the next ten years. Some communities have instituted dig moratoriums following the completion of major projects with success in forward-thinking infrastructure plans. I hope that you will consider either of these ideas in implementation of this rail project, or any other massive rail project in the Commonwealth. Thanks

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comments. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is a conceptual planning study that will evaluate the feasibility of passenger rail service between North Adams, Greenfield, and Boston. In addition to this study, other efforts including (but not limited to) the East-West Passenger Rail Study and the Berkshire Flyer aim to increase transportation options, support economic development and reduce emissions, among other goals.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: Jens Michaelson

Date: 03/01/2022

Thanks for your reply, Lauren. While I do understand it is merely conceptual, I think adding in ideas to shift the cost-benefit analysis may actually tilt the scales much higher towards the side of the project being built. We have seen quite a few of these projects end up not being built, and my comments are for hopeful in the direction progress in the form of iron in the ground. Further, I think the other proposed rail corridors (South Shore) may benefit from similar mandates. Thanks again! Jens

Comment 13

Name: William Johnson

Date: 04/16/2022

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

I would be interested in the northern tier rail connection.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 14

Name: Adam Simon

Date: 05/28/2022

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

It is a real shame that Eastern and Western MA are so disconnected by public transit. It is easier to get to NYC and VT from the Pioneer Valley. This should not be the case. Western and Eastern MA should be united by this already existing rail line for the benefit of the whole state of Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 15

Name: Joe Kurland

Email: yosl@ganeydn.com

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Will a transcript of today's zoom meeting be available?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Meeting materials, including the video recording with the transcript, will be made available on the study website.

Comment 16

Name: Sophie Michaux

Date: 06/23/2022

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

I commute from Conway to Boston 1-2 times a week for work, and a train to Boston is no brainer to me. I know many people who do the same thing and it would really add to the quality of life for everyone along that rail. People could travel from Greenfield to North Adams, and there is no doubt that that connection alone would help the cultural and

economic vitality of the valley. Many people in Western Ma are concerned with carbon footprint, and don't travel as much as they could because they have to drive. The fact that I can more easily get to NYC then to Boston via train is shocking to me. Let's unify Massachusetts, and lead the way in terms of public transportation!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 17

Name: Kaymarion Raymond
Date: 06/29/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

it's gotta stop close to me, that would be Athol, and allow me to take a day trip to Boston for medical treatment or events or just visits, or get mass transit to the airport. handy to have connections to worcester as well..

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 18

Name: Doug Brown
Date: 07/01/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Similar to how the East-West Study looked at all intermediate communities, it is important that the Northern Tier Study do the same. For example, with both residential and commercial development increasing greatly at Alewife, the study should be sure to

consider the potential for a new rail stop there. This would allow commuters from western Massachusetts to access jobs at Alewife without needing to drive or backtrack on the Red Line from Porter Square. At the same time, it would allow new Alewife residents to reach western Massachusetts without driving. The City of Cambridge has long desired just such a station, and easements for the siting of such a project were first established in 1989 and remain in effect to this day. Please add this to your study, as the ridership numbers used previously here are extremely dated by now. Thank you.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 19

Name: Benjamin Greenfield
Date: 07/05/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I live in Williamstown, MA. and it is impossible to plan a work day in Boston from Williamstown using mostly public transportation. I can do this from Williamstown to New York City. I think the largest economic potential for Massachusetts is the the under utilized land in between Boston and Williamstown along the northern tier. The ideal public rail system will help housing prices in Boston stabilize by making it possible to get from all the small communities along the northern tier. The small communities will benefit from access to the jobs along the northern tier feasible. This 2 factors will have ripple effects that would provide a generation of smart growth.

Comment 20

Name: Mary-Ann Palmieri
Date: 07/05/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

As older residents of New Salem, passenger rail along the Northern Tier Corridor would provide access to medical appointments in Boston as well as cultural events in Boston and North Adams and would definitely enhance our quality of life as we try to age in our home.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 21

Name: Ann Stewart
Date: 07/06/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Please build a Fitchburg rail line stop at the Alewife T stop in Cambridge. This area is rapidly undergoing considerable residential and commercial development. I wish that massDOT would get ahead of this situation. Thank you.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 22

Name: Eric Grunebaum
Date: 07/08/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

The East-West Study looked at all intermediate communities and it is critical that the Northern Tier Study do no less. For example, with billions of dollars of both residential and commercial development completed and more underway in the Alewife area of North Cambridge, the study should consider the need for a new rail stop there. Essentially a new

city is being built in this area of North Cambridge and a rail stop there would allow commuters from Western Massachusetts to access jobs at Alewife without cars or a need to backtrack on the Red Line from Porter Square (which most people will not do.) The Rt 2/Rt 16 intersection has been identified as having two of the top five worst congestion periods in the state: www.masslive.com/news/g66l-2019/08/f50108901d1916/these-are-the-most-congested-roads-in-massachusetts.html People need not car alternatives. A rail stop in this location would also allow new Alewife residents to reach Western Massachusetts without driving or commute to jobs in the North Station area. The City of Cambridge has long desired a station here and commissioned a study in 2015 (completed by HDR) suggesting that the numbers already justified a stop. Easements for the siting of such a project were first established in 1989 and remain in effect to this day. Please add this to your study, as the ridership numbers used previously are extremely dated and should be updated. Thank you for your consideration.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: Eric G.
Date: 07/14/2022

Thank you Lauren!

Comment 23

Name: Richard Jaffe
Date: 07/12/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

We live on Monterey. The rail service to NYC from Pittsfield would not be of any interest as it would be quicker to go to Wassaic for Metro North or Hudson for Amtrak. Rail service on the Housatonic line through Danbury or Southeast we would definitely use

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 24

Name: Carol Betti
Date: 07/12/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

We desperately need rail service from North Adams to Boston. Right now the only way we can get to Boston is to drive to Vermont and take Cape Air.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 25

Name: Jim Reische
Date: 07/12/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

The NTC would be a huge boon to Massachusetts for tourism and business travel. The benefits won't only flow to western MA. The ability to easily get back and forth across the state would enable folks from the west side of the state and even eastern NY to get to Boston without the misery of the Mass Pike. The population centers are well situated along the route, making it easier to connect the dots (as opposed to when I lived in rural central IA, and Amtrak's interest in a line from Chicago through Des Moines to NE and CO was blunted by the low population along so much of that route). This opportunity would be a huge boon economically, environmentally, culturally and politically!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 26

Name: Vicky Layden
Date: 07/13/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

this is a needed service. We pay taxes out here and we deserve to have the option to take the Trian into Boston.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 27

Name: Adam Hughes
Date: 07/13/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Please for the love of god do this rail service it's so desperately needed.

Comment 28

Name: Hulda Jowett
Date: 07/14/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

When I was a youngster I used to wave as the Minute Man, a real passenger train, with an actual dining car went through North Adams on its way to Boston. When I was in high

school I would take the Budd liner (one car) to visit friends near Boston. When I moved back here in the '60's I could at least get a bus to Boston. Then...nothing. I got pretty good at timing my drives into the city and could be in Boston in less than three hours from NA. Then traffic got so heavy that no matter what hour I left home it was a traffic nightmare from Concord on in. I don't go to Boston anymore. In Europe I have traveled on the TGV (high speed rail). The time and convenience are amazing. We should aim for passenger rail at a minimum.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 29

Name: Sherri Thomas
Date: 07/14/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Our family is in support of passenger rail. A daily link to Boston would be wonderful, as would a daily commute back and forth to NYC. Please move forward with expanding passenger rail in the Berkshires.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 30

Name: Mollyann Tabachnikov
Date: 07/14/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am very much in favor with any facet of mass transportation that makes it easier to connect from the Berkshires to either Boston or New York City. It will be interesting to see the schedule and the estimated time for travel. I would also like to see MassDOT work to connect Metro North to the Pittsfield station, in order to facilitate travel between our area and NYC.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 31

Name: Roy Kimmel
Date: 07/15/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I listened to to zoom meeting about the Northern Tier Passenger study and want to thank those who are working on it. My comments: I do not see where there would be enough demand for multi car train service in the mid and western sections, considering the projected diminishing populations and jobs in those areas. But what I do see are individual self propelled cars like the Budd cars used back in the 1950s and '60s. An update of such a vehicle would be battery powered, not diesel. Considering the low rolling resistance on rail, such electric type rail cars could have enough battery power to cover the entire route, with charging occurring overnight. Depending on occasional peak demand, two or three of these cars could be lashed together. These cars would have a tilting capability to provide reasonable speed in curved sections. No expensive overhead electrification infrastructure or curve straitening required. Yes, new rail, where require, for a smoother ride.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and for attending the Public Information Meeting. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 32

Name: Casey Gardiner
Date: 07/15/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I live in the North Berkshires and would personally use this rail route at least quarterly, and I imagine I would have visitors in parties of 1-5 using it at least monthly. However, for this to be a viable transportation option, the line needs to run frequently enough (e.g. minimum of 2 departures in each direction each day, ideally more) for people to reasonably use it. The current Amtrak line to Pittsfield is nearly unusable because it only runs once daily and not at sensible times for people with traditional jobs or leisure plans. If there were a more limited set of departures available on this Northern Tier line, it might make sense to align with the weekend and work week (e.g. departures in EACH direction on all of the following: Thursday evenings, Friday afternoons/early evenings, Sunday afternoon, and Monday morning). Please solve for the transit needs of passengers going in both directions; given the schedule, the Berkshire Flyer pilot program to Pittsfield seems like it is solving for New York residents traveling to the Berkshires but not Berkshire residents going to New York unless they are staying for a week.

Comment 33

Name: Alexis Loyd
Date: 07/15/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Having quick, reliable transportation between the Berkshires and Boston would be a game changer for the area. We moved to the Berkshires a little over a year ago and love it. The one concern I have about staying long-term is the lack of train transportation. It makes it much more difficult for visitors to come see us.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 34

Name: Robert LaTracmouille
Date: 07/15/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

There was a comment from, I believe, a town official in North Adams suggesting need to make connections to New York. As I commented during the session, your data seems to show a much greater need in Western Massachusetts north - south than west - Boston. I made three such comments through the comments. After my first comment was censored, I gave up on the event. My basic comment was that it looks like western Massachusetts would be better served with north - south / west connections, as is the apparent situation in southern Massachusetts in that New Bedford and Fall River have obvious connection to Providence which is ignored in planning. "Providence" was censored in reading the comment. I will be very interested in seeing statistics on the "temporary" South Coast line. My guess is that the big winner will be Brockton. It will be very interesting to see if that result is equally ignored if the "permanent" route is finally selected. What would make senses, BUT NOT BENEFIT BOSTON would be service between Brockton and the South Coast on its own merits. Would it die?. It seems that the big problem in the west and the south is that Boston area entities are not interested in policies which TRULY benefit west and south rather thAN primarily benefit Boston at the expense of the policies which benefit west and south. That is very distressing.

MassDOT Response

Hello Robert, thank you for attending and participating in the Public Information Meeting. This particular study is only funded with the purpose of examining the feasibility an east-west connection across the Northern Tier of Massachusetts. We appreciate your concerns and encourage you to continue to engage with our team and sign up for study updates, if you haven't already.

Comment 35

Name: Alexander Barguendo
Date: 07/18/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Please restore regular, frequent, comfortable passenger rail service. As a holder of a Harvard PhD in Economics and a former Chief of Research at the Texas PUC, I can attest that simple analyses of the types used on the East-West rail analyses are not adequate to capture benefits for this type of project. Enormous net benefits of the "we must build it and nudge the direction of resource use and growth and infrastructure" type are obvious in this instance.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 36

Name: Frances Arnold
Date: 07/28/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

As a New Salem resident I would love to take a train to Boston or Williamstown for a day/night and for exploring towns in between. My partner commutes daily to Concord and has mentioned the increase in traffic since the pandemic. If there were enough trains running to allow folks to commute, I know he would definitely take advantage of it.

Comment 37

Name: George LoCascio
Date: 08/04/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This is such a great idea. It would make my life so much easier. I really have a hard time getting to work in metrowest from where I live. This would be huge!

Comment 38

Name: Fred Daley
Date: 08/27/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

We travel back and forth regularly in the summer and fall from our home just across the New York line from Williamstown to Wachusett, where we take the commuter rail to North Station and connect to the Downeaster to reach our seasonal cabin in Maine. We would much rather board at Williamstown or North Adams, or even Greenfield, than have to drive all the way to Wachusett, even if the train were slower than driving. On the train we can read, work, check e-mail or have a nap, whereas driving is just a big time sink. Of course we could drive straight through between upstate New York to Maine, but we'd arrive stressed out and exhausted. Please make it possible for us to spend more time riding and less time stuck behind the wheel.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 39

Name: Shaun Suhoski
Date: 09/27/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Resumption of Northern Tier service would be an extremely beneficial development for the region. The study should also consider the potential for self-propelled passenger rail cars if there are segments where the grade or ridership may not support full-fledged commuter

rail.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the Study process. Please visit the Study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the Study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 40

Name: Arthur Strang
Date: 10/03/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I suggest the following alternative levels of transit service, rather than the two reported in the Globe. 1) The level of service provided by Metro North? Metro North, NY provides one hour service (60 minutes) to a Croton, NY from NYC 50 miles away. The Fitchburgh Line currently provides that service taking an hour and a quarter, 75 minutes. 2) A level of service comparable to the best in the world? 3) A level of service sufficient for housing development—comparable to that which produced significant(?) housing investment in Somerville? 4 A level of service sufficient to put a dent in the relative price of housing in Cambridge and other high housing costs in the Boston area? 5) A level of service sufficient to supply at least 50% of the starter-housing, and the low and moderate income housing as required by the projections of the City of Cambridge and other high cost housing places? Just a thought...one of the reasons why transit matters

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: Arthur Strang
Date: 10/07/2022
Response:

Sara S, You have the same first name and initial of my daughter. I do not doubt that any of the alternatives I suggested will cost more than 'planned'. Still, other cities, and not just NYC, have that level of service.

Comment 41

Name: Zane Lumelsky
Date: 10/07/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Passenger estimates must also include fare costs versus other mode costs to the traveler.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 42

Name: Emily Crowley
Date: 11/06/2022
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I am a resident of Greenfield, MA and I am in support of connecting the western corridor with the states capital via rail service. Cars are dangerous, and more rail service can get less cars on the roads, alleviating climate impact. It would also be convenient for bringing industry to the area as well as convenient for students to be able to travel between here and the capital. It would bring western Massachusetts into the conversation that usually centers around greater Boston. If the fair share amendment passes, the money needs to go towards public education and transportation, which could go into funding this project and fixing the rails. We need to make it easier for people to live in our state, and our country. Cars are dangerous, expensive, and harmful for the environment

Comment 43

Name: Barbara Alexander
Date: 12/22/2022
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

The language in the materials accompanying the study announcement of the requirements or hurdles that rail must meet for it to be a "...competitive option" is so wrong it is breathtaking to see at this point in a worldwide climate crisis, in a supposedly well-educated setting such as Massachusetts state government. The externalities issue means this language needs to be scrubbed and re-worked immediately. It is well-established that when externalities are properly accounted for, rail is vastly preferable to car or truck or air transport. However, when rail does not exist, it is not possible to begin offering the pricing that would move people out of cars, off planes, and so on. Any speculation about what they will do is just pie in the sky. If they fail to respond, they may need to be incentivized via gasoline taxes, or may find themselves incentivized by uninsurable risks near the coasts and other inevitable developments. If governments have failed to provide rail in the meantime, it will constitute classic "fiddling while Rome was burning." Shame on you for this framing.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. One of the study's goals is to minimize the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation and, as the study alternatives are developed, they will be evaluated based on the study goals and objectives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 44

Name: Jennifer Vanwyk
Date: 01/08/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I would ride this train weekly! But, I think that it would receive even more ridership if it connected all the way to Albany. I live in Franklin County and am looking at taking a job in Albany, this would allow me to do this and significantly reduce my gas emissions and would be much safer than driving in the winter. I would use this rail to get to Boston for

flights. And my neighbor would use this to do a bi-weekly commute to Boston. I think this is a FANTASTIC idea, and more trains across New England would be a great use of our tax payer dollars.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 45

Name: Emma Stamas
Date: 01/08/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This sounds like an excellent idea, Could these tracks need to be used for freight as well?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Freight currently operates along portions of the Northern Tier corridor. As part of the evaluation criteria for the service alternatives, one of the objectives is to minimize impacts to freight rail operations. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 46

Name: Barbara Jarrett
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Driving to Brookline to see our family is difficult for ma and my husband, ages 85 and 89.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 47

Name: Barbara Jarrett
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Rail alternatives currently are far too long and necessitate my driving instead. As I am 85, this is a risk to my health and safety! I have no other way to visit my family.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 48

Name: Paul Hadley
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Adding passenger rail would greatly aid in getting to Logan Airport from Shelburne Falls!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 49

Name: Xander McDonald
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am disabled and this proposed route would be great to get to Boston for doctors appointments.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 50

Name: Amy Teffer
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Yes! Please! This is essential for those that work and live along this line, especially working mothers.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 51

Name: Teresa Siarnacki
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This is a great idea-- would definitely use on trips to Boston instead of driving. Would be great if the rail could extend to Albany as well, to connect to the larger Amtrak network.

Comment 52

Name: Ruthann Rudel
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

A link from Greenfield to Boston in one direction and Albany in the other would really enhance alternatives to private automobiles for people living or working in western Mass. The Albany link would connect this with Amtrack's hub there.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 53

Name: Joanne Garland
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Living in Greenfield, and traveling often, I have a special interest in being able to use public transportation to reach Logan Airport. In the past there were buses, but these are long gone.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation

framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 54

Name: Unknown C.
Date: 01/09/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Follow the old train lines rt 2 athol orange greenfield area needs rail. It will reduce alot of people's daily commutes. The service will bring more people to the area increasing economic viability that was destroyed when rt 2 bypassed the towns and the old rail services left the north quabbin region

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 55

Name: Vinca Jarrett
Date: 01/10/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

We are desperate to have an easier and more direct way to get from Boston to Western Massachusetts with stops at the very least in Greenfield and North Adams. Right now it takes two or three transfers from Boston, and takes as long as 8 hours! This is ridiculous and adversely impacts the environment, as well as disparate communities who need better, more economic ways of travel.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 56

Name: Ezra Rudel
Date: 01/11/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This seems like a great idea! I would definitely use it as someone who lives in Boston but frequently visits family in the Greenfield area and doesn't have a car. It would get even more ridership if it connected all the way to Albany, NY.

Comment 57

Name: Nicholas Wildman
Date: 01/11/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This project is incredibly important and I know several people who would use this service for both professional and personal trips. Please do all you can to expedite this project.

Comment 58

Name: Michael Leary
Date: 01/11/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

A Northern Tier passenger rail service that runs from North Adams to Boston would greatly benefit the patients of the North Adams Campus of Berkshire Medical Center and the main campus of BMC. There are a number of local patients who have had to travel to Boston for second opinions or procedures that are not provided locally, and a Northern Tier service would allow these patients easy travel to the eastern part of Massachusetts, as many also

have transportation issues including no access to their own vehicle.

Comment 59

Name: Ms. Avie Kalker
Date: 01/11/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

For some reason, the GOOGLE (?) spinning colored ball BLOCKED my participation in the January 11 Webinar. I could not Vote, Raise My Hand, etc. I gave up on the Webinar and hope I can see it during the next few days. I do have a few questions, but I will raise them if I do not see/hear anything about them. I do need TECH help to avoid the spinning ball again. That is the first time that has happened to me while on ZOOM.

Comment 60

Name: Brendan Read
Date: 01/12/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Will or could your analysis look at two secondary markets that could add revenue to this service? 1. Boston-Vermont-Montreal: which has long been proposed. Amtrak is planning to extend the Vermonter to Montreal. The Northern Tier is the shortest existing route to/from Boston. 2. North Adams-Albany/Schenectady for not only connections to New York City but also to western New York State, Toronto, and Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, also to Saratoga Springs, Plattsburgh, and Montreal. Mentioned on today's webinar while it was noted that the direct route via Troy no longer exists, it must be noted that the absence of one does not preclude its success. Witness Amtrak's New York-Pittsfield train via Albany--the direct routes from New York City to Pittsfield also no longer exist. One question: is it possible and economically feasible to restore the tracks from North Adams to Pittsfield?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. In Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct a study of the feasibility of rail access between North Adams and Boston. This conceptual planning study seeks to assess the economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges, and identify all necessary improvements to support restored passenger rail service along the Northern Tier. Potential stopping patterns beyond the study boundaries may be examined as part of this or a future study effort.

Comment 61

Name: Robert Malanti
Date: 01/12/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

After attending last evening's presentation, I submit the following comments: Construction of the project should begin in North Adams and head east to ensure Western MA receives the service connections lacking today. Ridership on the daily Lake Shore Limited from Pittsfield to Boston and the reverse should be reviewed as the Northern Tier proposals offered five train connections in each direction rather than only one. As echoed last evening, the catchment areas need to be expanded to capture demand.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 62

Name: Carolyn Sellars
Date: 01/12/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Thanks for the great presentation last night. Two thoughts I had after the Webinar: 1. Is the electrification of this line being planned or considered? Replacing diesel engines would be wonderful and good for public health. 2. I think the last training heading west from Boston was around 10 pm? Is that right? That seems too early to handle trips after events in Boston that often don't end until 10 or later. Seems like a 11:30 or midnight train might better.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 63

Name: Carl McKinney

Date: 01/13/2023

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment: This is a great start- but please do not loose sight of, at least in future phase- to connect the North Adams connection to Albany/Rensselaer, New York. As both an economic and practical matter to fail to do so will significantly reduce the potential success of regional economic cooperation and integration.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 64

Name: Jack Dunk

Date: 01/14/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Create train station stops at, south Ashburnham, Gardner, Athol, Orange, Millers Falls, Greenfield, and, North Adams, Massachusetts along the proposed northern tier railroad line corridor.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 65

Name: Richard Wiater
Date: 01/14/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=alwbrZ4knpg> Please look at this link it's about a maglev train. Why not build a maglev train from the Berkshires to Boston?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 66

Name: Richard Wiater
Date: 01/14/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=alwbrZ4knpg> Please look at this link.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 67

Name: Cole Raineyslavick
Date: 01/15/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am writing in response to the first two alternatives. Both of these would be improvements over the existing total lack of service. The higher investment alternative clearly provides a superior level of service for a cost that is still quite reasonable when compared to highway costs. I would say however that both have similar shortcomings. The lack of a stop in Gardner a city of over 20,00 people, while providing stops in Greenfield, pop: 17,768, and North Adams, pop: 12,961, seems particularly strange from a ridership perspective, especially since Gardner also lacks existing commuter rail service. I would also advocate for considering stops in Athol, pop: 11,945 and/or Orange, Pop: 7,569 as stations could be placed in convenient downtown locations. A stop in Shelburne Falls is probably not justifiable on the basis of population but it is a popular tourist destination and providing a non-car option to travel there would be a boost for the town and provide cleaner alternatives for tourists. These added stops would also improve the potential of rail travel along the corridor that isn't oriented exclusively towards travel to and from Boston by providing providing an alternative to driving on along route 2. Please consider electrification along the route which would speed up travel times as well as providing environmental benefits, as this could help offset the time penalties of adding new stations. It is amazing that the state is considering two passenger rail corridors to Western Mass. I hope this one is not lost in the momentum of the other East-West rail through Springfield. These corridors should not be seen as in completion, as they serve different parts of the state. They are also potentially complementary as both enable connections to the Vermonter, enabling travel to and from New York City, Philadelphia, D.C. and potentially in the future to Montreal. Both Also connect to the Valley flyer, enabling connections along the Connecticut river valley. The full potential of these services should really be considered

together as part of an intercity rail plan for the Commonwealth. Service options should also ideally include consideration for timed transfers to other regional and inter-city trains in both Greenfield and in Boston. Please do this right, a poor quality service will not produce the mode shifts that we need to achieve decarbonization goals. This really could be a high level service that opens up currently transit starved parts of the Commonwealth to all kinds of destinations, please turn it into one.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 68

Name: Kelly Cash
Date: 01/18/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am moving to Heath, MA. I am from Canton, MA and my husband and I are now moving towards Heath to be closer to his aging parents. I work for State Street Bank out of Boston, we are now going back into the office 3x /week. It would be helpful if we could go in the direction of the more efficient plan of cutting travel times down to 3hrs, it's worth the \$2b. I think 4hrs will definitely lose commuter ridership but, assuming this is not the intent. I would love to provide input from a commuter perspective. The talent pool in western MA is amazing, very educated people waiting for this so they may have an opportunity to work in Boston or places east. Please remember/consider western MA residents in decisions.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial

alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 69

Name: Rauley Caine
Date: 01/20/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

As the service variations and recommendations are completed, we should be aware that there are many actors and interest groups who would like to scope-creep this project into something that it doesn't need to be. There is nothing wrong with having a (relatively simple) project that purposefully and primarily benefits residents of western and far-western Massachusetts. There should be no consideration of any unnecessary vanity rail infrastructure or station infrastructure; there should especially be no consideration for any rail service/station stops between Fitchburg and Boston. This territory is already covered by MBTA CR and should not be considered in the initial phases of this project - and honestly if ever considered, because these areas should focus on improving their existing rail programs instead of bogging down this fledgling service. Any considered service types in future planning should all consider running express between Fitchburg and Boston. This project should be, at least at first, constructed as cheaply and hastily as possible to get the service up and running. Then, we can focus on phase 2,3,4,5,6,7 etc. to build out the program service and infrastructure. Let's get this going with used or leased equipment, a private rail contractor like the Hartford Line, and wooden ADA-accessible platforms at as few stations as possible. Let's get this service off the ground quickly and THEN worry about building it into what we all know it really could be- amazing and transformative mobility option for WESTERN Massachusetts.

Comment 70

Name: Judd Greenstein
Date: 01/27/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I live in Gill, near Greenfield, and frequently work in Boston/Cambridge. I would absolutely use this train regularly if it were provided in such a way that both day trips (leave AM, return

PM) and overnights (leave AM, return AM) were possible. This means including relatively late trains back in a westward direction (so one can go to dinner or even a show, get to the train station, and make the train —10:30 or 11pm, ideally), and relatively early trains westwardly as well, so that if one stays over, the first train gets one back in time to have a largely complete work day. Another consideration — it would be massively helpful to have a stop in Cambridge (Porter Square), so that one did not need to make the difficult train trip from North Station to Cambridge, or transfer at Fitchburg and ride nearly the entire duration locally, adding 30-40 minutes to the trip. Thank you!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 71

Name: William White
Date: 01/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

As much as I am a fervent supporter of rail, the numbers don't look great - probably as this line connects only to secondary/tertiary destinations with low population density. Hard to imagine service of anything like five trains per day given how many potential routes there are that are still unserved yet have much higher population and rider potential - not necessarily in MA other than East-West. In looking further, I hope consideration is given to adding one station west of Boston to allow transfers from MBTA without backtracking to North Station.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial

alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 72

Name: Kaymarion Raymond
Date: 01/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

have a stop in orange or athol. people out here travel by car because there is no alternative. there are few jobs. affordable housing is near impossible to find. some of us are only recently getting internet service. building the economy would be great if if new businesses would follow reliable rail service. there is great manufacturing potential here to build a more self-sufficient economy with agriculture and wood products as well as developing a tourist vacation destinations. also, i live in wendell. I am old. but i will never try to drive to Logan airport ever again. Sometimes my family has to go for medical appointments in Worcester and Boston. i would love to go to WoSox games, visit friends in Stowe, attend cultural events in Boston, but driving to the east is difficult for me and the increasingly aging population of this town. and buses don't serve us. i am not going to Greenfield, let alone Springfield, to catch a train east. As for cost of this project, low population and poor areas like ours need to be valued and subsidized by servers. We have been penalized this way by phone/internet providers, buslines and by the medical industry, but we provide fresh air and clean water to the crowds of the east. Pay up before we secede from the Commonwealth :)

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 73

Name: Lynne Feldman

Date: 01/29/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Please consider adding a station in the underserved North Quabbin area (Orange or Athol).

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 74

Name: Sidney Rothstein
Date: 01/30/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I would like to register my support for the rail line that will offer the fastest and most frequent service between North Adams and Boston. I recognize that optimizing service comes at a cost, but that cost will pale in comparison to the extensive benefits that rail service will bring to the region. I strongly endorse the high-investment option and encourage the project to move full steam ahead. I would also ask the project team to be more visible and vocal -- many folks out here don't know about this project, despite the massive benefits it would bring to them.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 75

Name: James Starkey
Date: 01/31/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I strongly urge that this study include service for Athol and Gardner, MA. These towns have grown in population greatly over the last 10 years with most new residents working and shopping to the east. Leaving a gap in service between Greenfield and Fitchburg makes no sense. Drive Rt2 East in these communities anytime after 4 AM and you feel like you're on 128 at rush hour with the reverse being just as bad. What were these two communities left out of the study with such an obvious need?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 76

Name: Matteo Pangallo
Date: 01/31/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This is an essential project for the people of central and western Massachusetts. I am concerned, however, that the proposed map shows no planned station stops between Wachusett and Greenfield. This is a span of 46 miles; the average distance between stations east of Worcester County is just 5 miles. This is not equitable and it will lead to low ridership numbers. The communities on the proposed rail line between these two stations have about 85,000 people in total, not even including the people who live north and south of those communities. If the plan is to have the people of central and western Massachusetts utilize this line on a regular basis, and thus justify its cost, there must be a few more station stops in this part of the state.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 77

Name: Walker Powell
Date: 01/31/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I would like to strongly advocate for at least one station in the North Quabbin area (Orange/Athol), which is one of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the state and is often overlooked and passed over in state-wide projects. There is a large gap between the proposed stations in Greenfield and Fitchburg that leave out a huge number of people and communities that could really benefit from a local station.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 78

Name: Edwin Ward
Date: 02/02/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I was pleased to read the results of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, and am excited for the potential economic, mobility, and climate benefits associated with the project

should it ever be constructed. I am concerned, however, that much like with the East-West Rail Study two years earlier, MassDOT has artificially reduced ridership projections and increased construction cost estimates by completely ignoring the obvious connection available with New York. The freight line currently serving North Adams continues west until Mechanicville, NY, where it connects with the Colonie Main Line, a preexisting rail line that heads south through Troy, NY and into Albany, NY. The Albany metro area has a population of over 1 million, and already has an Amtrak crew base and layover facility, negating the need to construct a new one in North Adams. Furthermore, by taking a route through Troy, NY, the Commonwealth may find a willing partner in New York State. With a population of over 50,000 people, Troy hasn't seen rail service in over 65 years, and adding service through there would be in line with New York's transportation and climate goals. In addition to vastly increasing the number of potential riders on a Northern Tier Line by continuing to Albany via Troy, Amtrak could through-run Northern Tier equipment into New York City as part of its frequent Empire Service between Albany and New York. Such a service would foster unprecedented connectivity between Boston, western Mass, New York's Capital Region, the Hudson Valley, and New York City. Although few passengers would find the likely 7+ hour end-to-end trip time between Boston and New York via North Adams appealing, it would greatly induce riders between intermediate points along the entire route. The Northern Tier Line would be a better candidate for through-running to New York City than an East-West Rail Line through Pittsfield because the Northern Tier Line would arrive in Albany from the North, already facing South. Because East-West Rail will arrive in Albany from the South, those trains would need a second locomotive at the rear, or a cab car, to reverse direction for the trip to New York City. Ultimately, I think the 'higher investment' proposed alternative is well-designed in terms of stations within the Commonwealth and daily number of trips, but I urge MassDOT to work with NYS DOT to ensure any final proposal continues west to Troy, Albany, and through-runs to New York City. Assuming those extra stops (and riders) and the negated need for a layover facility in North Adams, I think MassDOT will find an even more attractive use case with far lower annual costs per rider. Thank you very much for considering my comments. Sincerely, Edwin Ward edwin.ward@bc.edu

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial

alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 79

Name: Fay Hsieh-Lewis
Date: 02/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Please have a stop in Athol, MA. It would greatly help with needed transportation accessibility. I'm concerned about the lack of accessibility for myself and other people who cannot or are not confident in their ability to drive into Boston (especially to North and South Station for connecting rides). I, and my peers, want to use public transportation but we can't if it's not physically. My concerns: - Most Athol public school students are impoverished. Accessible public transportation would give them more options for their future and enrich the community. It might increase racial diversity (since Athol is mostly ethnically white) - Being nearby. If I can only access a train station by car or by multiple buses that take an indirect route to the station then it's not accessible to the public - Public transportation that takes 2-3 times longer than riding in a car because the stations/stops are not close enough - Trains that arrive on schedule - Being able to add funds to your Charlie Card without having to go into Boston other than getting Charlie Cards by mail (Charlie Card machines and stores that add funds) - A waiting area that's wheelchair accessible, provides rain cover, and has public seats for the disabled. An indoor waiting area would be amazing (coverage from freezing winter weather)

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. One of the study's goals is to promote transportation equity. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop and assess four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 80

Name: Antoinette Cariddi
Date: 02/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Is there a possibility of extending the rail travel from Pittsfield to Boston?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. The East-West Passenger Rail Study assessed rail service alternatives between Pittsfield and Boston. For more information, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study>. Since the completion of the East-West Passenger Rail Study, the Western Massachusetts Passenger Rail Commission was established. For more information on the Commission, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/event/western-massachusetts-passenger-rail-commission-meeting-2022-12-09t110000-0500-2022-12-09t120000-0500>.

Comment 81

Name: Joanne Garland
Date: 03/01/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I would so love to be able to take a train from Greenfield to Boston--to fly out of Logan Airport, to enjoy a day in the city, to research genealogy, to shop, to visit historic sites. Driving into the city is exhausting, to say nothing of the hassle and expense of parking.

Comment 82

Name: David Moresi
Date: 03/31/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

As planned second homeowners in Boston we would very much find this to be advantageous to our needs.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 83

Name: Daniel Joudrey
Date: 04/29/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Passenger rail would be a godsend to north central Massachusetts. I work in Boston, but the commute can be brutal. It would help to have alternatives to driving into the city.

Comment 84

Name: Brian Lickel
Date: 04/30/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Thank you for your efforts on this. I strongly support rail service along this route!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 85

Name: Cole Raineyslavick
Date: 04/30/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

The two proposed alternatives do not do enough to provide access along the route. Only adding two stations will limit ridership. It is downright bizarre to not include a stop in

Gardner, which has a higher population than Greenfield and North Adams. Athol also has a similar population to North Adams and would fill a large gap in the proposed service area. Athol and Gardner also appear to be the only communities besides Williamstown, which also does not have a proposed stop, to meet the minority criteria for environmental justice communities according to the map presented in January. Likewise they both have high concentrations of zero-car households compared to the corridor in general (Gardner specifically appears to have one of the highest concentrations) and also have areas that fit the income criteria for environmental justice communities. These stops in particular feel like no brainers to include and one has to wonder why they aren't already included. Other stops that should be considered are Orange and Shelburne falls as they would serve relatively dense communities, both of which have areas that meet the income standards for environmental justice communities and have a relative prevalence of zero-car households (the Southern part of Orange appears to have one of the highest concentrations in the corridor). Shelburne Falls is also a popular tourist destination and a train that stopped there would allow more people to visit without a car, decreasing traffic and pollution.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop and assess four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 86

Name: Zachariah Kisj-Degiulio
Date: 06/22/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Please make this happen! It would be a huge help for me

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 87

Name: Gail Bienvenue
Date: 06/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

An east - west rail line is sorely needed in WMA.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 88

Name: Christine Copeland
Date: 06/28/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

We travel to Boston frequently because our son lives there. The road is ok but dangerous to drive at night and sometimes during the day. Whenever we can take the train from Wachusett we do. We need a driver to take us and the electric charging stations aren't working there. The commute to Wachusett from Northfield, where we live, is 1hr 15minutes, practically half way to Boston. Every time we drive to Boston, I wish there was a train to take instead. All the Franklin Country trains go to New York - ironic.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: Christine Copeland

Date: 07/07/2023

Response:

It would be helpful if you gave the study website a link here (for the older generation...)

MassDOT Response

Date: 07/11/2023

Response:

Thank you for your comment. The study website is linked here: <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>.

Comment 89

Name: Alex MacIsaac

Date: 07/10/2023

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I think building a railway connecting North Adams to Greenfield and Boston is extremely important to reducing carbon emissions from cars in Massachusetts and would make transportation between different parts of Massachusetts much more accessible to disabled people, low income people who can't afford/can barely afford cars, etc. Also good at opening up more work opportunities for people and making western Massachusetts a more appealing tourist spot, if it has a convenient railway that leads to it. East and western Massachusetts feel like separate states, so this would be great at making them feel more connected. I know I would use it all the time.

Comment 90

Name: R Hoyt

Date: 10/07/2023

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Is the proposed service connecting to the existing MBTA service in Fitchburg (aka "Commuter Snail") or continuing to Boston? Will there be express trains also? What is the proposed travel time and frequency? What is the anticipated fare (in 2023 dollars) that will

attract and retain passengers? How will the annual deficit between operating costs and fare revenue be funded and for how long? Is the service sustainable to prevent future inevitable fare increases and service reductions? Will there be connecting local transportation services from the stations to places of employment and places of interest? Will there be a station in S. Ashburnham that will connect to the area rail trail system (oh so close).

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Based on feedback received, four additional service plan alternatives were developed and assessed as part of phase two. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: R H.
Date: 10/30/2023
Response:

Thank you. I do not find fares or the annual funding of operating costs mentioned.

MassDOT Response

Date: 11/09/2023
Response:

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is a conceptual planning study assessing rail service alternatives along the North Adams-Greenfield-Boston corridor. At this conceptual level of planning, fares and annual funding of operating costs have not yet been determined. For more information on intercity passenger rail operations and public governance, please see the Massachusetts Intercity Passenger Rail Governance White Paper, available at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/east-west-passenger-rail-study-documents>

Comment 91

Name: Jack Dunk
Date: 10/13/2023

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Extend the mbta commuter rail Fitchburg line to south ashburnham via the former pan am southern main line

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 92

Name: David Conlon

Date: 10/22/2023

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

I am thrilled that the state is looking to add passenger service to Boston, but am disappointed to see just how few stations are being considered. While I understand more stations adds to the time it takes the train to reach the end of the line, adding more stops will increase ridership, especially in the Hilltowns. For instance, request stops could be added in Shelburne Falls and Charlemont. Shelburne Falls is a very popular tourist destination and local residents, such as myself, would much rather take a train to Boston than drive there. Also, Charlemont is a popular destination because of Berkshire East and the various kayaking/tubing/rafting companies. Adding these two request stops would require minimal investment (can be as simple as a low level platform, or a small high level platform like at Greenfield) and would be a great boost to our local economy. Is this something that can be considered by the study?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework. Based on feedback received, four additional service plan alternatives were developed and assessed as part of phase two, which include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 93

Name: Gordon Elwood
Date: 10/26/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This would be so incredible. Please do it.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 94

Name: John Anhalt
Date: 10/27/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I support the local service option. I do think the Shelburne Falls stop should be replaced with Charlemont. This would facilitate transit access to Berkshire East ski facility and is more centered between Greenfield and North Adams. Shelburne Falls residents would be no more than 10 miles from either Greenfield or Charlemont both of which are already serviced by bus transit. Also, you may consider presenting data on climate effects of electrification vs diesel vs no train.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 95

Name: Nathan Haugh
Date: 11/03/2023

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Hello, in the most recent information meeting, it was mentioned that the lower investment option would not have much investment in rail and signal upgrades. I strongly suggest not doing this, as the current track conditions are not optimal for freight operations, let alone passenger. Many of the signals are old have faults with interlocking switches often times not throwing properly. The track is also in not ideal condition, seeing as the rail is rated for 25 MPH the entire way from Wachusett to North Adams, barring the slow track between MP 382 and MP 384. The speed rating for this is also just barely acceptable, seeing as trains travelling at track speed very often rock back and forth heavily, at all locations throughout the route. I would urge massDOT to take the higher investment option, as this would not only increase track speeds tremendously, but it's also increase rider comfort and safety.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 96

Name: Mallory Sullivan

Date: 12/07/2023

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

As a one-car western Mass household, the Northern Tier Passenger Rail will open up significant career and leisure opportunities for my family. I support Alternatives #2, #3, and #4 because they represent significantly improved transit between Greenfield and Boston. Reliable transportation between these two cities will expand economic opportunity in Western Mass and offer a low-stress and highly desirable commuting option for me into Boston. I'm excited for one of these options to become a reality, especially if it is the electrified service option. I am neutral toward Alternative #5. I oppose Alternatives #1 and #6 because these entail the same or more time to travel between Greenfield and Boston than by car (or driving from Greenfield to Wachusett, then taking the commuter rail to Boston). These options may be costlier for passengers than current options and would require more planning for riders (Alt. #6). I would not use the service if Alternative #6 is

implemented.

Comment 97

Name: Stuart Cohen
Date: 12/11/2023
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Considering the availability of empty industrial properties in Gardner and Athol/Orange for development, these two stops should be included.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your support of including Gardner and Athol as stops in the study alternatives. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 98

Name: Greg Ferland
Date: 12/24/2023
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I am excited at the possibility of Boston and North Adams being connected by passenger rail. It takes around 3 hours to drive the route with normal traffic conditions, so any train service that takes longer than 3 hours will not attract much ridership. The option that minimizes travel time and offers service at an affordable price will be the most successful.

Comment 99

Name: Judd Greenstein
Date: 01/26/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

As an arts programmer based in western MA, along the proposed route, this train line would immensely improve our ability to bring artists out to rural communities (many of them located in Boston do not have cars, or easy access to one), and to market our activities to eastern MA residents who might come out for a weekend but not want to deal with traffic. Once the trains are set up, an economy will develop around it. Greenfield needs more hotels but the economics don't justify building them - this would help bolster the case, and help develop a sustainable tourist economy in the region.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 100

Name: Frank Citino
Date: 01/28/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

My name is Frank Citino and I live at 248 Locks Pond Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072. I am interested in seeing if a multi use trail could be folded into the northern tier rail project at least between North Adams and Greenfield? Multi use trails along active rail lines are beginning to see progress. Here are a few articles discussing these advancements.
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/shared-use-path-planning-primer-0/download>
<https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/basics/rail-with-trail/>
<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2014/08/18/why-it-makes-sense-to-add-biking-and-walking-routes-along-active-rail-lines> If you live in Franklin County, you must drive a good distance to be able to take advantage of a longer multi use trail for exercise. The Canal Side Trail is wonderful, but not very long. A longer trail would greatly enhance the quality of life in Franklin County. I hope this will get some attention. Sincerely, Frank Citino

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. While this study is focused solely on the feasibility of passenger rail service in the corridor, additional elements like the multi-use trail could be studied as part of a separate effort. Any study of the use of the rail right-of-way would need

to be agreed upon by the owners. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 101

Name: Thomas Benavtho
Date: 02/12/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Very excited to get rail access along the Fitchburg line all the way out to North Adams! My partner went to college in North Adams and we like traveling there on occasion; a rail connection would make the trip much easier and likely more frequent as well. Because of the largest impacts to ridership and the environment, I hope you move forward with implementing the full overhead electrification.

Comment 102

Name: Michael Hines
Date: 02/29/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

It is a brilliant and very important project that should absolutely be completed. It is important to give northern and more rural regions of the state fair access to the Boston area. Additionally, spreading passenger rail service to under served communities will help influence more sustainable modes of transportation to develop out there. Plus, this opens up the possibility of passenger rail service to expand to Vermont and New Hampshire. Perhaps inspiring the Capital Corridor Project! Also, having the Amtrak line running north from Springfield into Vermont allows for the MBTA to finally have a sort of outer transfer opportunity. Instead of having to just go to Boston to get to a line out to a town near you, you have the option to go from on branch to another without ever having to set foot at the hub in Boston.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 103

Name: William Harrington
Date: 03/07/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I would love to see this be electrified (but obviously any service would be a huge step in the right direction). One graphic that might help show the upfront cost/operational cost dynamic would be some sort of graph showing total cost over time (initial jump followed by steady growth) for various alternatives to show their cross-over points. I think you did a great job of stressing the positive economic benefits of ridership. Ridership is king. Also, although this low density line is probably fairly low priority for an investment in overhead electrification, the line's history of electrification combined with the fact that electrification would be done in conjunction with comprehensive track improvements, could give this line might have the lowest electrification cost per mile in the state. As such, it could be an opportunity for MassDOT and local contractors to gain experience and work-out the growing pains of installing overhead electric before ramping up to the much larger and expensive task of electrifying the MBTA commuter lines. A learning experience might be an effective way to sell this to the legislature.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 104

Name: Eric Buddington
Date: 03/22/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Thank you for posting the meeting videos online. I support the plan for electrified service. Along with the environmental benefits, electric trains produce far less noise. Using them

here will build the equipment and expertise to better electrify other lines in the future. One concern: many of my Amtrak trips have been delayed due to contention with freight trains. This is not a problem where Amtrak owns the rails. In Albany, they run at more than 100 miles per hour with no freight contention. The state should take ownership of the tracks to ensure control over operations.

Comment 105

Name: Harry Wilson
Date: 03/23/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I support the expansion of railroad service from Boston to North Adams

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 106

Name: John Wallace
Date: 03/25/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This is a much needed project. Any project that eliminates peoples need to rely on cars is worthwhile

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 107

Name: Virginia Grant

Date: 03/25/2024

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment: I will be attending the zoom meeting but I also wanted to leave a comment I live in North Adams and I would use this rail service all the time as it is now I travel to Fitchburg now to catch the train. So please I would even be happy with the train service being in Florida ma before the hossac tunnel or shelburne falls. Even Charlemont

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Stakeholder Reply

Name: Virginia G.

Date: 04/08/2024

Response:

I have thank you

Comment 108

Name: Dorothy Mclver

Date: 03/25/2024

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

I cannot attend the meeting but I support having passenger rail along th Northern tier corridor of W. MA. I want to be able to take a train to Boston to visit and also so I can connect with rail service to Maine. The train station in my hometown in So. Maine has been operational for awhile now but getting to Boston to hook up with the train is challenging. Whhen I tried I found the bus got into the bus station in the middle of the night and I would have to get a cab to the trian station to catch the morning train then or later, but either way stay awake all night or sleep in a transit staiton which as an women in my late 70's is not something I want to do. yet too late (and expensive) to stay in a hotel anywhere for just a few hours. And many people would like to be ablet o take the train to Boston (and to Maine as well I expect). We need this. Thank you for working to make this happen. Dorothy Mclver

Greenfield, MA

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 109

Name: Rauley Caine
Date: 03/25/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Given the high cost for full electrification of the line, and its dismissal as a serious option by project planners, please instead consider using hydrogen H2-powered fuel cell zero emission multiple unit electric trains, such as the Siemens Mireo Plus H or the Stadler Flirt H2 (which can already be produced in the USA in Utah). Use of these zero emission Hydrogen-powered multiple units should be prioritized over conventional (and most likely second-hand) Amtrak diesel locomotives and aging push-pull Amfleet I/II coaches. Stadler Flirt H2 trains will soon be operated in revenue service in California on the San Bernardino County's Redlands Commuter service. Twenty-nine (29) more Stadler Flirt H2 trainsets have also been ordered by Amtrak California (September 2022), proving that these vehicles use trusted technology. Currently, the Stadler Flirt H2 ZEMU (zero emission multiple unit) has a publicized operating range of about 250 miles-- ample range for a trip between Boston and North Adams. More likely, the trainset could be refueled at the North Adams depot quickly between trips with the publicized refueling time to be about 30 minutes. Given the modest ridership estimations for this corridor, using smaller ZEMU, such as the Stadler Flirt H2 with a seated capacity of 108 passengers, and a top speed of 79 miles per hour, makes sense for a regional line of this kind. Combined with a ZEMU's superior acceleration and deceleration statistics versus a standard conventional diesel push-pull consist, the choice for using a ZEMU powered by Hydrogen becomes self-evident. To put it plainly: using a hydrogen powered zero-emission train will be a more practical than installing overhead catenary on the entire corridor and more environmentally suitable to our area than defaulting to the use of aging push-pull locomotives with only one (or two) fifty year old Amfleet cars trailing behind. Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are zero-emission, have better range than their battery electric train counterparts, and can be quickly refueled at a depot with only minor investment to infrastructure. The Berkshire RTA

is already looking to convert its buses to H2; a shared Depot in North Adams with a Hydrogen electrolyzer (a device that creates usable hydrogen from electricity and water) could provide synergy towards this project to becoming zero emissions as well as the Berkshire RTA's existing goals for zero-emissions public transit. Financial investment in H2 vehicles from the start will be a wiser investment than installing overhead catenary along the entire line (both immediately and when factoring in lifetime investment for ongoing maintenance). Investing in H2-powered ZEMU train sets will provide zero emission travel more efficiently than installing overhead catenary along the entire corridor, and will certainly more environmentally practical than either battery-electric trains or conventional push-pull diesel trainsets.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 110

Name: Sue Sullivan
Date: 03/26/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am in full support of evaluating and adding to rail lines in western mass. I have taken Amtrak several times to NYC and NJ and love it. If we had a local train from Turners Falls down to Northampton and Holyoke that would be amazing!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 111

Name: Riley Mullany
Date: 03/26/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I strongly support the restoration of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, especially the stops in Shelburne Falls, Greenfield and North Adams. As a folk musician and artist living in Boston, having reliable transit to and from these cities would greatly improve my life and livelihood. Weekend service in particular would be very helpful for me particularly Thank you for your time. Riley

Comment 112

Name: Cole Raineyslavick

Date: 03/27/2024

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

Hello, Please Combine Alternatives 3 and 4. The stop penalty on electrified rail is lower so it could add those two stops with minimal increases in service times. Sincerely, Cole Rainey-Slavick

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 113

Name: Martha Hanner

Date: 03/29/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

Very interesting presentation tonight, 3-28-24 . I definitely favor Option #4. If one is going to the expense of creating the service, there should be stops at 2,3, or 4 additional places along the way, including Gardner and Athol, in order to service the northern part of Western Mass. population effectively. Extension to Albany is lower priority and can wait: Nothing should be constructed in a manner that would exclude an Albany extension in the future. #5 Electrified service might be considered ideal, to lower emissions, but I fear the

high cost would mean it's never going to be built. #3 Having to change to the MBTA at Fitchburg seems like a big hassle that would add > 1/2 hour travel time and would probably discourage ridership. #6 The beneficial economic development and potential population growth in the area to be served should definitely be factored into the analysis, as emphasized by a few of the Q&A speakers tonight. I agree with those who emphasized that the tickets will have to be priced attractively to encourage ridership. No one mentioned the ability to just sit and get some work done on the train instead of driving. Much more efficient use of one's time! I look forward to the future rail service! I'm no longer willing to drive to Boston from Amherst and would love to have train service to go visit for the day or weekend.

Comment 114

Name: john Leblanc
Date: 03/29/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

The only impact this project will have is making well connected "consultants" very rich. There is no call nor need for this project unless you can prove that every train will be self supporting with zero government funding. This just another attempt to extend the failure of the MBTA past the 128 beltway.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 115

Name: Claire Chang
Date: 03/31/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment: I was not able to provide comments during the public hearing last week. please accept these comments. I appreciate the broad alternatives researched and described in much detail. I think that due to climate change and the need to electrify transportation on all levels as soon as possible that any choice for passenger rail must be

electrified rail. even with the greater cost. we will need to electrify and not add to the fossil fuel GHG emissions for the Commonwealth to be able to meet 2030 or 2050 goals. I would like to see what the costs are for the different routes and stops if trains were electric. I think that if it is possible to design for the best, comprehensive electric passenger rail service, then implement in phases from Fitchburg west. maybe Fitchburg to greenfield. then add greenfield to pittsfield. then add pittsfield west as a final possible addition given funding and other resources. I would certainly take advantage of a station in Greenfield on electric trains to Fitchburg or boston north or south station. the shorter duration of travel would be best. but again as an intermediary solution. transferring to commuter rail could work. maybe a commuter express train to porter sq or north station? Greenfield has ample EV charging stations located close to the train station. but other stops would need to add EV charging stations level 2 for commuters. thank you for your consideration. I look forward to progress on an electric passenger rail for the Northern Tier.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 116

Name: Jonathan Myers
Date: 04/05/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

Thank you for the hearing on the Northern Tier Rail. To be able to access Boston and Albany-Rensselaer from North Adams would be a real game changer for all of Berkshire County.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Please visit the study website for additional information or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.

Comment 117

Name: Gordon Squire
Date: 04/05/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I listened to a program on a proposed northern rail line to North Adams and have a number of objections. At present during times of the year there is no weekday public transportation between Berkshire County and Metro Boston other than the daily Amtrack which is frequently way behind schedule coming east. For the limited numbers and dispersed destinations of those passengers the present Mass Pike is more than adequate for the short distance from Springfield by bus especially if more frequent. There is adequate public transportation from Pittsfield to North County. Transportation funding could better be allocated elsewhere.

Comment 118

Name: Michael Hines
Date: 04/29/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

do it do it do it do it do it do it do it do it do it do it do it do it PLEASE

Comment 119

Name: Jackson Hotaling
Date: 05/30/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Please establish passenger rail along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts. I do not own a car and visit family in Massachusetts and several neighboring states in New England; this would be a welcome option for traveling to see them.

Comment 120

Name: Jackson Hotaling
Date: 05/30/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Please establish this corridor. I submitted a previous comment, however I had issues with the mobile version of this survey and could not mark 'In favor'. I am trying again.

Comment 121

Name: Joel Pattison
Date: 06/12/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I fully support the creation of a passenger rail alternative in the northern tier corridor. As a new resident of Williamstown, the lack of easy public transit options costs me hours in the car on small roads, and makes a journey to the Eastern part of the state up to a three-hour drive, on top of finding parking. If a passenger rail service existed linking Williamstown or North Adams with the East, I would plan to spend much more time and money in Massachusetts, as opposed to New York and Vermont. It would relieve pressure on the already tight housing market in the northwestern corner of the state and make it possible to consider living somewhere further away and commuting. At present, the car dependency of the Berkshires is one of the reasons I am considering moving elsewhere. If possible, I would like to know what the possible time frame for such an investment in rail infrastructure might be.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment. Draft recommended next steps and a draft implementation plan, including a sample implementation timeline, were presented at the public meeting held in March. Please visit the study website to review the presentation or to sign up for updates as the study progresses, if you haven't already.



Date February 23, 2023

To Office of Transportation Planning
Attn: Makaela Niles, Project Manager
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

From Western Mass Rail Coalition

RE **Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study - Comments and Suggestions**

Dear Makaela,

With this letter we are submitting the following set of comments regarding the presentation¹ that was made as part of the Northern Tier Rail Study Public Workshop meeting on January 11, 2023.

Sincerely,

Western Mass Rail Coalition

¹ [Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Public Workshop Presentation](#), January 11, 2023

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Comments

The ridership estimates need further work

On the surface the ridership estimates seem rather low.

Commenting first on the projected ridership for the North Adams station stop –

The Study Team's forecast for North Adams range from:

220 – 440 annual boardings for the Lower Investment Alternative

1,430 – 4,180 annual boardings the Higher Investment Alternative

This works out to about one (1) boarding per day for the lower investment alternative and between 4 and 11 boardings per day for the higher investment alternative. Both sets of numbers seem exceedingly low considering that the study team has proposed six round trips trains a day.

We think it would be useful to compare the projected boardings for North Adams with the actual boardings for the Brunswick Maine station, the northern terminus of Amtrak's *Downeaster* service which operates daily between Boston, Portland, and Brunswick.

We think these stations are comparable for a number of reasons, in particular because their populations are similar and because they both are terminal stations on rail corridors whose other terminal is Boston North Station.

North Adams MA

Boardings (projected)	1,430 – 4,180/year¹
Population	20,492 (2020) incl. Williamstown
Proposed train service	6 round trips/day
Travel time to Boston by train ²	2hr 48m

Brunswick ME

Boardings² (actual)	approx. 32,000/year (65,109 riders in FY2022)
Population	21,756 (2020)
Train service	5 round trips/day (Amtrak Downeaster)
Travel time to Boston by train	3hr 20m

What is noteworthy is that the actual boardings at the station in Brunswick (with 5 round trips per day) are 8 to 22 times greater than the projected boardings in North Adams (with 6 round trips per day) — even after considering that the travel time by train from Brunswick to Boston is about 30 minutes longer than the projected travel time by train from North Adams to Boston.

The Downeaster service to Brunswick has been operating for about 10 years now, so part of the difference could be because it takes time to build ridership.

Ridership in Brunswick is high because the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) has set fares at very reasonable levels and they have very actively promoted Downeaster service since its inception.

We think the study team should take another look at the ridership numbers for North Adams. They should consider the possibility that what happened in Brunswick, when the Downeaster arrived, could happen in North Adams as well.

¹ Boarding numbers shown are for the Higher Investment Alternative.

² For boardings we assumed that half of reported ridership is boarding and the other half is detraining at the station.

#

And now if we look at the projected ridership for Greenfield —

The Study Team's forecast for Greenfield range from:

2,370 – 6,660 annual boardings for the Lower Investment Alternative

7,370 – 20,350 annual boardings for the Higher Investment Alternative

This works out to about 6 – 18 boarding per day for the lower investment alternative and 20 – 56 boardings per day for the higher investment alternative — with six round trips trains a day, as proposed by the study team.

These numbers also seem low compared to the actual boardings in Brunswick (a comparable station) and when one considers that Greenfield would be only a 2 hour train ride from Boston, with the Higher Investment Alternative.

We think it is very important to carefully factor in the potential ridership that could exist with a well-timed connection between the *Vermont* and points west of Greenfield, in particular Boston.

The connection in Greenfield would work just like the connection that takes place today when *Valley Flyer* riders step off the train at New Haven Union Station and then board an Amtrak Northeast Corridor train to continue their journey.

In 2016 the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Vermont Agency of Transportation, in coordination with the Connecticut Department of Transportation, completed a three-year feasibility and planning study known as the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative. (NNEIRI Study)

This study recommended that a new round trip passenger train between Boston and Montreal via Springfield be established. The projected annual ridership between Eastern MA and Vermont/Montreal for this new service is shown in this table:

Eastern MA – Southern VT	34,700
Eastern MA – Northern VT	28,200
Eastern MA – Montreal	113,100
TOTAL	176,000 riders/year

Data source: [Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative Study Summary](#), 2016, page 10

If we conservatively estimate that half (50%) of the ridership that was projected in the NNEIRI Study would be willing to travel between Boston and Vermont/Montreal by making a connection in Greenfield we are left with 88,000 riders/year on this route.

In this case, roughly 44,000 people per year (121 people per day on average) would be boarding a train in Boston to travel to Greenfield to connect with the northbound Vermonter and another 44,000 people a year (121 people per day on average) would be stepping off the southbound Vermonter in Greenfield to board a train destined to Boston.

This ridership does not appear to be accounted for in the current projections for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study at the moment and it should be.

The need for an intermediate stop in the Athol-Orange area

We strongly recommend that the study team include an intermediate stop between Greenfield and Fitchburg, since these two stops are separated by a distance of nearly 50 miles.

An intermediate stop would allow people who live east of Greenfield to more easily use the proposed service to travel to Boston rather than requiring them to drive to the station in Fitchburg — or west to Greenfield (opposite the direction they wish to travel by train) from Millers Falls, as example.

The ideal location for such a stop seems to be the Athol-Orange area which has a combined population of nearly 20,000 people and is approximately halfway between Greenfield and Fitchburg.

The need for an intermediate stop at Porter Square in Cambridge

We recommend that the study team include a stop for this proposed service at the existing MBTA Porter Square Station in Cambridge since approximately 30% of all riders on the MBTA Fitchburg line step on or off at this station.¹

¹ [Commuter Rail Counts, Fitchburg Line, 2018](#)

Upgrades to support higher speeds will be needed

In the presentation the study team outlined two sets of infrastructure investments, referred to as the Lower Investment Alternative and the Higher Investment Alternative.

The Lower Investment Alternative envisions that no significant track improvements will be made to the corridor before service starts.

Without track improvements the run time between Boston and Greenfield and North Adams would be 2hr 35m and 4hr respectively and trains would operate at an average speed of less than 30 mph between North Adams and Fitchburg. We think these running times are too long and the train speed too slow to support sustained ridership.

If this project is to move forward the track improvements outlined in the Higher Investment Alternative will be necessary so that trains can operate with lower running times and at higher speeds along the Northern Tier Corridor.

The infrastructure investment costs estimates seem unreasonable high

The Study Team's proposed investment estimates seem very high when compared to

- (a) the Patriot Corridor Project, which was the previous heavy rehabilitation of this line in 2011, and
- (b) the Knowledge Corridor – Restore Vermonter project which was completed in 2015.

The capital cost per mile for these each of these projects can be summarized as follows:

Patriot Corridor Project (2009 – 2011)

\$ 0.5 million per mile (in 2022 dollars), as detailed in Appendix 1

Knowledge Corridor Project (2011 – 2015)

\$ 3.7 million per mile (in 2022 dollars), as detailed in Appendix 2

Northern Tier Project – Lower Investment Alternative

\$ 11.0 million per mile (in 2027 dollars), as detailed in Appendix 3

Northern Tier Project – Higher Investment Alternative

\$ 24.8 million per mile (in 2027 dollars), as detailed in Appendix 3.

Of course these projects are not identical, but we think that they are similar enough to allow us to compare the cost per mile for each project.

The Northern Tier capital improvement numbers, on a cost per mile basis, are *22 times higher* for the lower investment option and *50 times higher* for the higher investment option compared to the Patriot Corridor project.

The Northern Tier capital improvement numbers, on a cost per mile basis, are *3 times higher* for the lower investment option and *6 times higher* for the higher investment option compared to the Knowledge Corridor project.

If we use the Knowledge Corridor \$3.7 million cost per mile (in 2022 dollars) the capital cost of the *Higher Investment Alternative* works out as follows:

Track work	\$3.7 million x 83 miles =	\$ 307 million
Construction contingency (35%) =		\$ 107 million (35% was used in the East-West Rail Study)
Signals & Grade Crossings =		\$ 143 million (includes 50% contingency)
TOTAL		\$ 557 million.

This number (\$557 million) would seem to be “in the ballpark,” or even on the high side, when one considers that most of the Northern Tier Corridor is in significantly better physical condition than the Knowledge Corridor was back in 2011.

We think it would be appropriate for the study team to take another look at the capital costs and see if maybe the projected costs are too high.

The estimated cost for bridge work seems to be very high

The study team has proposed that \$450 million dollars be spent on bridge work for the Northern Tier Project. This would appear to suggest that the study team feels that many of the bridges on this line need to be replaced before passenger service can be provided on this line.

A lay person would ask the obvious question here, which is why would it be necessary to spend \$450 million on bridges to support passenger trains when the existing bridges are safely supporting freight trains today.

Notably, the bridges along the Knowledge Corridor, many of which are of the same vintage as the bridges on the Northern Tier Corridor, were upgraded to support passenger service at a cost that was a fraction of what the study team says needs to be spent before passenger trains can operate on the Northern Tier Corridor.

It would seem to us that rather than spend \$450 million replacing bridges, if that is what is being proposed, that the study team should look to the lessons learned from the Knowledge Corridor project — where appropriate bridge repairs were made and permanent speed restrictions were imposed on some bridges (if needed).

Rolling Stock expense

Why has the study team included a cost (\$44.54 million) for rolling stock (coaches and engines) in the cost alternatives?

This cost apparently assumes that the MBTA would be the operator of the service, which would appear to be contradictory to MassDOT's apparent desire for Amtrak to be the operator of intercity passenger rail service in the Commonwealth.¹

If Amtrak were the operator of the service then there would not be any fixed capital cost for rolling stock since Amtrak's cost for providing the service would include usage-based costs associated with using Amtrak-owned rolling stock.

¹ [Massachusetts Intercity Passenger Rail Governance White Paper](#), November 12, 2021

Capital costs associated with a phased introduction of service

Decision makers may wish to consider the possibility of phasing the introduction of passenger rail service on this route, as example a first phase being a one-seat ride between Greenfield and Boston, and a second phase being, an extension of the Greenfield–Boston service to North Adams.

With this in mind we request that the study team adapt its work so that the capital and operating costs are clearly broken out into two parts, (a) Greenfield-Boston service, and (2) an extension of this service from Greenfield to North Adams.

To be clear, we are not asking with this letter that the introduction of this service be phased. We are only asking that the costs be clearly detailed so that decision makers in the future can understand the costs associated with a possible phasing of the service.

Involvement of the rail corridor's owner in the development of capital costs

The presentation that was made by the study team during the January 11, 2023 Public Workshop meeting summarized, at a very high level, significant capital improvements to the privately owned rail corridor between Fitchburg, Greenfield, and North Adams.

It is not clear at the moment what level of involvement the owners of this rail corridor (Pan Am Southern LLC) had in the development of the infrastructure improvements that the study team has summarized in the Public Workshop presentation.

With this in mind, it would be useful for the Working Group and the public to fully understand what involvement if any Pan Am Southern LLC has had in the development of proposed capital improvements and the associated costs for Northern Tier Study.

The high cost associated with starting the service with five round trips a day

We suggest that the study focus on a more modest introduction of service — with three round trips per day instead of five. Reducing the number of round trips at the start would significantly reduce the annual cost to operate the service.

With this in mind, we would suggest an early morning round trip, an early evening round trip, and afternoon trips that are timed to allow a westbound Northern Tier train to connect with the northbound Vermonter, and the southbound Vermonter to connect with an eastbound Northern Tier train.

The next study meeting should be a hybrid meeting in Greenfield

As a final comment, we would like to ask that future study meetings be hosted as hybrid meetings rather than virtual meetings.

As convenient as virtual meetings are, we feel that much is lost when all of the study meetings are only hosted as virtual meetings.

An in person meeting allows for the opportunity for the study team, the working group, and the public to meet face-to-face and build relationships with one another, which is something that is for the most part not possible in the two-dimensional world of virtual meetings.

In person meetings, with a hybrid option, we feel would lead to better communication and collaboration between everyone involved in the study process.

If a hybrid meeting is to be held it would make sense to us that it be hosted in Greenfield in the large public meeting room at the Olver Transit Center.

Western Mass Rail Coalition

An association of rail advocacy groups working together
to expand the use of passenger rail in Western Massachusetts.

westernmassrail.org

Member Organizations

Trains In The Valley

trainsinthevalley.org

Contact: Ben Heckscher

ben@trainsinthevalley.org

413-588-8260

Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop

palmertrain.org

Contact: Ben Hood

palmertrain@gmail.com

(413) 283-2141

The Train Campaign

barringtoninstitute.org

Contact: Karen Christensen

karen@barringtoninstitute.org

413-528-0206

Chester Railway Station & Museum

chesterrailwaystation.net

Contact: Bob Daley

rdchester@comcast.net

413-354-6365

APPENDIX 1

Patriot Corridor project background and basis for cost per mile cost

Between 2009 and 2011 the rail corridor between North Adams and Fitchburg was substantially upgraded by Pan Am Southern LLC as part of the Patriot Corridor Project.

Approximately \$47.5 million¹ (in 2009 dollars) was spent on rehabilitation of the Pan Am Southern Main Line between Ayer MA and Mechanicville NY. The project included the rehabilitation of 138 miles of track, replacement ties, and just over 35 miles of new continuously welded rail.

When this work was completed the main line track between North Adams and Fitchburg included the following mix of track² —

	<u>Maximum speeds for track class</u>
2 route miles of Class 1 track	10 mph freight / 15 mph passenger
71 route miles of Class 2 track	25 mph freight / 30 mph passenger
19 route miles of Class 3 track	40 mph freight / 60 mph passenger

The capital cost for this 138 mile Patriot Corridor Project was \$ 63.3 million (in 2022 dollars) which works out to a cost of roughly \$0.5 million per mile (in 2022 dollars).

¹ MassDOT State Rail Plan, September 2010, Page 2-59.

² Pan Am Railways, Timetable No. 3, June 15, 2014.

APPENDIX 2

Knowledge Corridor project background and basis for cost per mile cost

Between 2011 and 2016 the Knowledge Corridor (a.k.a. the Connecticut River Main Line) between Springfield MA and East Northfield MA was totally rebuilt as part of the Knowledge Corridor – Restore Vermonter project.

The Knowledge Corridor project transformed 49 miles of Class 1 (10 mph freight) main line between Springfield MA and East Northfield MA to Class 4 track with a top passenger speed of 79 mph — at a cost of \$140 million in 2011 dollars.

The project included the replacement of approximately 95,000 railroad ties; installation of 49 miles of new continuously welded rail; installation of new turnouts and crossovers; installation of a new signal system; installation of new warning devices at 23 public grade crossings and four private crossings; upgrades to six bridges and the construction of new timber station platforms in Greenfield and Northampton.

The capital cost for the 49 mile Knowledge Corridor Project was \$ 182.2 million (in 2022 dollars) which works out to a cost of roughly \$3.7 million per mile (in 2022 dollars).

APPENDIX 3

Proposed Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project and basis for cost per mile cost¹

	Lower Investment	Higher Investment
Track work	\$ 273 million	\$ 1,418 million
Bridges	\$ 450 million	\$ 450 million
Signals & Grade XCs	\$ 145 million	\$ 143 million
Stations & Layover	\$ 46 million	\$ 46 million
TOTAL COST	\$ 914 million	\$ 2,057 million
Cost per mile	\$ 11.0 million per mile	\$24.8 million per mile

Notes:

All amounts are 2027 dollars

Mileage used was 83 miles (Fitchburg to North Adams)

Data source: Northern Tier Public Workshop presentation, January 11, 2023

¹ Not including rolling stock

Re: northern tier study where r u

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Mon 5/23/2022 4:32 PM

To Tony Jewell [REDACTED]

Good afternoon Tony,

Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Since the first Working Group meeting in December, the study team has been working on Task 2 (the documentation of previous efforts along the corridor) and Task 3 (the existing conditions analysis). The upcoming second Working Group meeting will include a review and discussion of the work completed.

Please visit the study [website](#) for meeting information and to sign up for study updates, if you haven't already.

Best,
Makaela

From: Tony Jewell [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, May 23, 2022 4:17 PM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: northern tier study where r u

Hi Makaela,

Tony Jewell here in western mass was pleasantly pleased with the start of things last December and then poof neither sound nor sight of anything else since.


Tell me it ain't so and in fact zillions of state and federal dollars are scheduled to be spent on a startup study of two train a day service Greenfield to and from North Station. And the next best thing for the Valley Flyer and the Al Crocker Limited, a part b operation study which will involve overnight with sleeper service from Boston to Montreal via Greenfield.

Waiting in ecstasy,

Tony Jewell

northern tier

From Tony Jewell [REDACTED]
Date Mon 5/23/2022 5:25 PM
To Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

 1 attachments (2 MB)
troygfield.pdf;

Makaela,

Thanks for the ultra fast response!!

I guess I was hoping that while Biden passenger rail dollars were still flying around that there was a ghost chance that maybe something rail positive could happen for the historically (since the 1860s to be precise) largely out of sight out of mind northern tier.

Tony

I have enclosed a copy the cover of an original document about northern tier struggles written by the original northern tier rail service agitator alvah crocker the person largely responsible for the hoosac tunnel despite tons of opposition from what I would call the southern tier railroad and its allied politicians.

75
TROY AND GREENFIELD RAILROAD.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. ALVAH CROCKER,

ON THE

BILL FOR THE MORE SPEEDY COMPLETION OF
THE TROY AND GREENFIELD RAILROAD,

IN THE

Senate of Massachusetts,

APRIL 15, 1862.

"There are three things which make a nation great and powerful—a fertile soil, busy workshops, and easy transmission of men and commodities from one place to another."—BACON.

"Let us make permanent roads; not like the Romans, for subjecting and ruling provinces, but for the more honorable purpose of defence, and connecting more closely the interests of various sections of this great country."—CALHOUN, in 1816.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER, PRINTERS, 4 SPRING LANE.

1862.

Re: Northern Tier study, extension into Vermont? To Montreal?

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Tue 8/16/2022 9:42 AM

To BrendanRead [REDACTED]

Hi Brendan,

In 2016, the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) conceptual planning study was conducted.

More recently in 2021, AMTRAK released its Corridor Vision Plan. The Plan includes information on its vision for corridors nationwide, including their Ethan Allen and Vermonter services in the northeast.

Best,
Makaela

From: BrendanRead [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, August 12, 2022 9:19 AM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: RE: Northern Tier study, extension into Vermont? To Montreal?

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you, Makaela,

Understanding that Boston-Montreal has been discussed are there any studies, or individuals at MassDOT who have been looking at it, that I can present this suggestion to?

--Brendan

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Niles, Makaela \(DOT\)](#)

Sent: August 12, 2022 9:07 AM

To: [BrendanRead](#)

Subject: Re: Northern Tier study, extension into Vermont? To Montreal?

Hi Brendan,

I hope all is well. Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

In Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct a study of the feasibility of rail access between North Adams and Boston. This conceptual planning study seeks to assess the economic and environmental benefits as well as any associated implementation challenges, and identify all necessary improvements to support restored passenger rail service along the Northern Tier.

Potential stopping patterns beyond the study boundaries may be examined as part of this or a future study effort.

Best regards,
Makaela

From: BrendanRead [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2022 8:32 AM
To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>
Subject: RE: Northern Tier study, extension into Vermont? To Montreal?

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Makaela,
I have read that over the years the suggestion has been made for Boston-Montreal service through Vermont. But there has been no interest by New Hampshire in it.
Could the scope of the Northern Tier study be expanded to look at the business case for a Boston-Montreal train through Fitchburg and Greenfield?
Or, noting the reintroduction of passenger train service to Burlington via Rutland, for a Boston-Fitchburg-Greenfield-Rutland-Burlington service?
Would the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Vermont be interested in looking at the potential of the above?
Thank you,
Brendan Read
[REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Re: thank you

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Fri 7/15/2022 9:48 AM

To Local Account [REDACTED]

Good morning,

Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. All public input will be taken into consideration throughout the study process.

Please visit our study [website](#) for additional information or to sign up for study updates.

Best regards,
Makaela

From: Local Account [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 7:54 PM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: thank you

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi,

Thanks to everyone for tonight's meeting. I'd like to be kept informed for the future of northern tier pax rail. Could you add me to your mailing list?

Another thing about the Berkshire Flyer -- I was very excited when I heard about rail service between NYC and Pfld, but very disappointed to see that it is, essentially, one-way. While I should be partial to my home state and my adopted home town of Adams, I would like to visit NYC with my kid, and that's just not practical the way it's set up.

Having pax rail several times a day from NA to NS would be great. One time I had to cancel a trip home to Boston because the Lake Shore Limited was so late getting to Pfld that there were no commuter rail options left. I was tracking the train so I didn't even bother going to Pfld. South Station is nice, but I don't want to sleep there.

Leaving here at say, 9 and getting there by lunch time would be great. Make like a tourist, catch the T or the commuter rail out of the city and be with family and friends for supper. Make the return trip arrive here at night and coincide with BRTA and that'd be great. As it stands, leaving Boston at noonish to catch the LSL to Pfld really messes up the opportunities to visit and tourist.

Thanks again.

J

Re: Greenfield Platform Question

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Wed 10/26/2022 9:24 AM

To John Garrett [REDACTED]

Hi John,

Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

In Section 84 of the 2020 state budget, the Massachusetts Legislature directed MassDOT to conduct a study of the feasibility of rail access between North Adams and Boston. Potential stopping patterns beyond the study boundaries may be examined as part of this or a future study effort.

As part of the alternatives development process, a half-day public workshop is anticipated to be held in fall 2022 to review the two initial service plan alternatives and evaluation framework. Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives as part of Phase 2.

Best regards,
Makaela

From: John Garrett [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, October 25, 2022 5:25 PM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: Greenfield Platform Question

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening Makaela,

My fiancé and I took the train down to New York from Greenfield over the indigenous people's day weekend which got me to thinking about the idea of taking a train to Boston. We realized that Boston wasn't on the same line as New York so we figured the platform would need to be on the other set of tracks. Where would it go though? Energy Park? Are you guys allowed to build it over the road? This may be something that was already on your website but I didn't seem to see it.

Thank you!
John Garrett

Re: Northern Tier Rail Service Study

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Mon 1/30/2023 9:37 AM

To James Starkey [REDACTED]

Good morning James,

Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As part of phase one of the alternatives development process, the study team developed two initial service plan alternatives and an evaluation framework.

Feedback received will be used to develop four additional service plan alternatives, which may include potential stations beyond those included in the initial alternatives.

Best,
Makaela

From: James Starkey [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 7:32 PM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: Northern Tier Rail Service Study

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms Niles,

I understand you are involved with the study of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier of MA into Boston. I had an opportunity to view a map of some of the projected costs/improvements involved. I was surprised not to see Gardner as part of the study. The map shows North Adams, Greenfield and Fitchburg. Is Gardner being left out of the plans for some reason or is it just that this is a very preliminary part of the study?

I am very much in favor of Gardner having rail service as it did decades ago. All one has to do is be on MA Rt 2 between Gardner and Boston during rush hour to clearly understand the crying need for service to Ben resumed. Gardner and the surrounding smaller towns are now THE western edge of the commuting population going east and leaving it out of such such an important study would make no sense.

Regards,

James Starkey

Re: Public engagement for Northern Tier Passenger Rail

From Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Date Mon 1/30/2023 10:17 AM

To Sidney Rothstein [REDACTED]

Good morning Sid,

Thank you for your email regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Similar to the recent public workshop, the study team will utilize various avenues to publicize future meetings, including: announcing the meeting on the study website and via the study's email distribution list, social media posts, and press releases.

Best,
Makaela

From: Sidney Rothstein [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, January 29, 2023 6:29 PM

To: Niles, Makaela (DOT) <makaela.Niles@dot.state.ma.us>

Subject: Public engagement for Northern Tier Passenger Rail

CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Niles,

Thank you for spearheading the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project. As a resident of North Adams, this is a tremendously exciting project, especially here, as our town is in dire need of public transit connections and investments of this scale.

I'm writing because I'm concerned about the level of public engagement currently being performed for the project. I did not learn about the public meeting this month until after it had occurred, and I am an engaged community member who keeps a close eye on this sort of thing. I would like to know what steps the project team will take to publicize future meetings.

Given the limitations of political representation in the Berkshires, it is very important that we have an opportunity to develop deep and broad community support for this project. This support will be crucial for holding our elected representatives accountable to continue supporting this project, which will be long-term and expensive. My fear is that if public engagement is not sufficient at this early stage, we will lose a once in a lifetime chance to revitalize Western Massachusetts.

Thank you again for your work.

All best,
Sid

Feb. 5, 2024

Mass. D.O.T.

10 Park Plaza

Suite 4160

Boston, Mass. 02116


Dear Sirs, my name is Gary Wood. I live in the town of Athol.

What I am writting to you about is. U.S. highway RT,2. The subject is. All the automobile traffic going east and west during rush hour. That highway can no longer handle all the traffic, seeing how it only is a two lane road.

I am not talking about turning Rt.2 west of Templeton into four lanes. We have a railroad running along that road. The time has come for us to fix that rail line up. So the state and the fed can put passanger trains back on. Several years ago the Boston T, expressed intrest ~~intrest~~ in running service out to the town Of Orange. But they won't do it on a single track system. At this time there is only one track running west of Athol. It used to be a two track system, in the heyday of trains. Second track ~~will need to be put back in.~~ Why the need, for rail you ask? The town of Athol ~~is growing.~~ is growing in leaps and bounds. People are moving out here from Boston. Due to the high cost of housing in Boston. I have been told in fact, that people are moving as far west as Greenfield. They work in Boston. Im' sure some of them pick up the train in Fitchburg and go the rest of the way into Boston every day to work. Commuter trains would be a big help. I hear there have been budget cuts. But we need trains now! They have been talking about this for twenty years. It is time to start the track work now. And building the new train stations. It will only cost more later on. Trains will also cut air pollution and save energy. It will get at least half of the car traffic off the highway. Some days Rt. 2 is a death trap. I have seen many ~~accell headons~~ Rt. 2 is the second deadliest highway in the country.

There are people who live up in North Adams. Many of then drive to Greenfield to work. They would love to have trains into Greenfield also.

It would also be great to bring back trolly cars in many places in Mass. instead of electric automobiles. Most people I know don't want an electric car. They cost too much and so do new batteries. This CO2 nonesence is insane. Less talk and more work on the trainsystem along the Millers river and ^{RT. 2} RT. 2


Gary M. Wood
163 Central St.,
Athol, Mass. 01331

PS. Please also fax this letter over to the
Federal Rail Road administration.



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Monica Tibbitts-Nutt, Secretary & CEO



March 29, 2024

Mr. Gary M. Wood
163 Central Street
Athol, MA 01331

Dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you for your letter regarding the potential for restored passenger rail service along the Route 2 corridor.

As you may know, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation is conducting the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study to examine the benefits, costs, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from North Adams to Greenfield and Boston, with the speed, frequency, and reliability necessary to be a competitive option for travel along this corridor.

The study has developed six proposed service alternatives and has conducted analyses related to their estimated economic and environmental benefits and impacts, among other aspects. As part of the next steps for this study, a draft final report will be released for public review and comment prior to being finalized.

For more information or to sign up for updates, please visit the study website at <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>.

Thank you for your interest in this effort.

Sincerely,

David Mohler
Executive Director
Office of Transportation Planning

Ten Park Plaza, Suite 4160, Boston, MA 02116
Tel: 857-368-4636, TTY: 857-368-0655
mass.gov/massdot

MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary

Project Name: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Description: Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Comment 669

Name: Cecilia Hirsch

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I attended a presentation and was thrilled about ALL options. Being able to go from Williamstown, MA to Boston in about 3 hours would be vastly superior to what we currently have; just this summer I did 6 to-from trips to Logan to bring my adult children and visitors to the area to-from Boston to the Berkshires. I also have children who study and work in Boston and both find it extremely difficult to come home via the one Pittsfield Amtrak track; usually this means they wait to get a ride to come home. I am most excited about the Albany extension as it would allow a complete corridor to open up in terms of tourism and commuting between the Berkshires/ Boston/ NY and beyond. The option 3 (electrified) seems like the one that embraces the future the most and would speak to the next generations of users. But, truly, ANY option would open up possibilities for residents of Western MA to be able to have access to the eastern part of the state regardless of whether or not they own a car. In my work, I travel regularly to the Charlemont area and to me this is access to the eastern part of the state! (in other words, you would find travelers who are using the mid-points of the route). Just this week I met a new immigrant family to Williamstown who had arrived at Logan from South Korea and had to pay \$250 for a taxi to drive them all the way out to the Berkshires. We need to do better.

Comment 670

Name: Tracey Sabolevski

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

Western MA (especially to the north) is entirely cut off from the eastern side of the state with regards to public transportation. Yet we have to travel to Boston for medical care, activities and cultural experiences. Schools here have falling enrollments, yet it's a beautiful and hard working part of the state. Why not expand rail service to encourage people who work in Boston to live in Western MA instead on NH?!

Comment 671

Name: Dawn Nelson
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I am so excited that this may be a possibility! I the 15 years in which I have lived in part or in whole in North Adams, the absence of reasonable public transportation options, between here and Boston and here and Albany, has been a consistent problem. I have had friends who have had to leave the area because of this difficulty. So I am thrilled that this is finally happening! Personally, I would prefer options 4 or 5. Having a combination of faster trains and more stops seems to me to offer the greatest chance of real success. If we can continue on to Albany, I think that would be wonderful, but if we can't, making the Boston to North Adams connection would be wonderful on its own. I still am not clear about the benefits of electrifying the service, but if that is found to be the smarter approach, I would certainly support it! I really hope this happens!!!!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 672

Name: Natalie Yorke
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

The Northern Berkshires NEEDS this to happen. We are isolates.

Comment 673

Name: Celina Savage
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This should definitely happen!! Any kind of public transportation to connect eastern and western MA is vital

Comment 674

Name: Noah Savage
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

The lack of public transit between Western Mass and Albany (or to Boston for that matter) makes it really tough to get around. Often the only way to an airport or train station is an hour long Uber. If I am getting from the Berkshires to Boston or New York, I first need a ride in a private car wither to Springfield or Albany. It's really a bad situation, and its the reason I probably won't live in the Berkshires as a young person.

Comment 675

Name: Helen Harrison
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I would love this and use it to go to Eastern Mass, Berkshire East, North Adams, and Williamstown. I would take the train from Northampton to Greenfield to take the Northern Tier train. It would be a great way to make these northern Mass towns more accessible from points south, such as CT and NYC, as well as to Boston, and vice versa. Also want to see the West-East rail!

Comment 676

Name: Brice George
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

any and all options for the city/mountains to be closer for all MA citizens is only an asset.

Comment 677

Name: Simon Raphael
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

My grandma lives in Western MA and I'm in the Boston area. A train would be so helpful. The US needs to up its game so we can connect our nation with an eco-friendly, affordable and fast transportation system.

Comment 678

Name: Maia Hirsch
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I would use the North Adams to Boston route very frequently. Please make it happen!

Comment 679

Name: Robert Savage
Date: 10/13/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Any public transportation that links Boston to western mass is a significant improvement to the quality of lives in the Berkshires and for employers who try to attract young talent to the area.

Comment 680

Name: Josephine WozniakVeisseyre

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Comment:

I am so excited to see the Northern Tier Railroad Restoration gaining traction! It would help the environment, connect us better to our state capital, bring investment back to the only county whose population is declining in Massachusetts! However, an important factor is underrepresented in this study: although the impacts of carbon emission are noted, the current model used fails to take into account that every year, the impacts of continuing carbon emissions will become worse. It is absolutely necessary that we reduce emissions as early as possible, which restoring the Northern Tier Railroad will accomplish.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 681

Name: Catherine Howe

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

We are in desperate need of train service from the northern Berkshires (north adams/williamstown) to Cambridge/boston. I would use it frequently.

Comment 682

Name: Cary Kandel

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

The implications of the Northern Tier passenger line would be felt throughout the state. With proper planning and community involvement, local and regional economies have the potential to reconnect with opportunities previously lost. This would include the increased diversification of the physical workforce, access to jobs throughout the state, and new avenues of tourism. Similarly, many aspects of the Northern Berkshires' economy and cultural centers would thrive. Massachusetts residents would have easier access to medical specialists, other transportation hubs such as Logan Airport, and many cultural beacons such as concerts, parades and sporting events.

Comment 683

Name: Charlie Nadler

Date: 10/13/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

The implications of Northern Tier passenger line would be felt throughout the state. With proper planning and community involvement, local and regional economies have the potential to reconnect with opportunities previously lost. This would include the increased diversification of the physical workforce, access to jobs throughout the state, and new avenues of tourism. Similarly, many aspects of the Northern Berkshires' economy and cultural centers would thrive. Massachusetts residents would have easier access to medical specialists, other transportation hubs such as Logan Airport, and many cultural beacons such as concerts, parades and sporting events.

Comment 684

Name: Eric F.

Date: 10/14/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

As an Eastern MA resident, the opportunity to travel to western MA with ease and convenience would be spectacular

Comment 685

Name: Pat Gazaille
Date: 10/14/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This would revitalize our rapidly declining area and give us all a unique opportunity to reconnect with eastern Massachusetts!

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 686

Name: JULIAN Hartmann-Russell
Date: 10/14/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I live in Northampton MA and am frequently in Greenfield and Franklin County. When I travel to Boston I prefer to take Route 2 instead of the Mass Pike and I would definitely utilize this service to travel to Cambridge and Boston. I think any of the alternatives that are generally close to the travel time by car (including traffic) would do well and I would use as often as possible. I have many friends and colleagues in southern Vermont who would also be thrilled about this service as many of them drive to Wachusett to take the MBTA and it is a bit far to drive.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 687

Name: paul ievins
Date: 10/14/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I strongly encourage you to pursue establishment, ASAP, of the highest possible speed rail service--electric, by all means--across the entire northern tier of Massachusetts. Such a travel option would be a great boon to travelers from BOS who would not need to rent and drive a gasoline-powered vehicle as now, would save wear and tear on Route 2, and would be a better climate solution for Massachusetts.

Comment 688

Name: KATHY BERGERON
Date: 10/15/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Please provide a train from pittsfield to Boston so western mass can connect to the rest of the state

Comment 689

Name: Max Prum
Date: 10/15/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

I grew up and lived for many years as an adult in Cambridge and Somerville, now we live in Florida, Ma near North Adams. When I lived in the city I never came out to the berkshires because it was inaccessible without a car. Now that I live here it is often difficult to go back because I have to deal with parking in the city. The west side of this state needs people and economic activity and the east side is over crowded and over priced. We desperately need transport options to get across Massachusetts and I very much hope thos project becomes a reality as soon as possible.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 690

Name: Anthony Daly
Date: 10/16/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This project would advance the economy in the western part of the state, which has fallen far behind the Boston area. This project would link MA residents in Berkshire county with our fellow citizens in the east, rather than being pulled south and west to NY and CT.

Comment 691

Name: Estela Ogiste
Date: 10/17/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I think this is a wonderful idea that would help revitalize the community

Comment 692

Name: Glna Meyer
Date: 10/20/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This would be so helpful for so many commuters to avoid the Route 2 only access to this area. Many more tourists that do not drive would be able to experience the Berkshires and support local economy.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 693

Name: Deborah Brothers
Date: 10/21/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

A northern tier route from north Adams to Boston is desirable. The commute to Boston due to traffic has only increased the time traveling by car. A train would help traffic and encourage folks to live beyond the Boston area . It is a shame that the true western Massachusetts has been left out of the state. It has meant that this part of the state travels westward to Albany and uses more of a NY centric corridor because the train options are closer in that sate than in our own Commonwealth.

Comment 694

Name: Adam Goodlitt
Date: 10/22/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I just want to offer my 2 cents that option 3 of electrified service seems to be the best option here. It is more expensive upfront but is cheaper to maintain and helps the state meets its climate goals by using zero emissions trains while providing faster service than some of the other options. I also want to point out that it had the best cost-benefit ratio in the study to help the project qualify for federal grants.

Comment 695

Name: Maurizio Pari di Monriva
Date: 10/23/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Public transportation to the western part of the state would be a resource that would be frequently used by people I know and would revitalize the state.

Comment 696

Name: Katie Luscomb
Date: 10/23/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I would very much like for there to be a public transportation option from the Berkshires to Boston.

Comment 697

Name: alex MacGibbon
Date: 10/25/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

WHY DO WE NOT HAVE A BUS FROM GREENFIELD TO BOSTON. How come I have to go all the way to Springfield or Amherst when a bus could easily just go down route 2, I know a lot of people that routinely commute from Greenfield to Boston including myself and I know there have been busses before on this route so why is there not a bus from Greenfield to Boston? I want a bus to boston.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Exploring scheduled motor coach service to Northern Tier corridor destinations is included as one of the recommended next steps for the study.

Comment 698

Name: Patricia Appelbaum
Date: 10/31/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I write in support of restarting Northern Tier Passenger Rail service. I live in Amherst and have reason to travel regularly to the Boston area. Car travel requires, and contributes to,

the struggle with traffic congestion, which can extend as far west as Leominster. Parking in Metro Boston is a problem. Train travel alleviates these stresses – but the nearest station, Wachusett, is nearly an hour's drive from Amherst, thus a two-hour round trip. How much easier it would be if the residents of Amherst, Northampton, and the surrounding area could travel from Greenfield. Moreover, some of us have family members – e.g. students, adult children, elders – in the Boston area who do not have cars. If they take the train to Wachusett, we must make two two-hour round trips to take them to and from the train, or the equivalent of driving to and from Boston. Other public transportation between Boston and Amherst is awkward and time-consuming. Please help us to reduce carbon consumption, traffic and parking congestion, and stress, by expanding passenger rail westward along Route 2.

MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary

Project Name: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Description: Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Comment 699

Name: Dan Hudson

Date: 11/14/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I am ranking the 5 alternatives proposed in the following order, the first being the most preferred: Alt. 5 Albany Expansion, Alt. 4 Full Local Service, Alt. 3 Electrified Service, Alt. 2 Higher Investment, Alt. 6 Northern Tier Trail Link, Alt. 1 Lower Investment. I live in Bennington, VT and work in Williamstown, MA. To me it is paramount that we get more transportation options to this region, so any of these options would be welcome to the alternative of not having expanded rail. I believe that providing more options to stop between North Adams and Fitchberg would be great, I think people would love Shelburne Falls as an option, and connecting Albany and Boston would be INCREDIBLE.

Comment 700

Name: Madelaine Taft-Ferguson

Date: 11/15/2024

Response Requested: Do not send me a response

Comment:

I would like to encourage MassDOT to continue focus on northern tier rail. As things stand right now, we in Western Mass and especially the northern section, are much more connected to CT and NYC than we are to the eastern part of this state, which is both ridiculous, and inconvenient in a sometimes quite serious way (i.e. if I want to get to Boston for matters related to government, or go east for medical care, I really can't do that without driving). Personally, despite living in and around Greenfield for more than a decade now I

have traveled east of Fitchburg fewer than a dozen times, because it's simply not worth the hassle and cost to drive and park in/around Boston. I would also visit North Adams much more often if I could make that trip via train; the car commute is of course less expensive and has less traffic than the eastern one, but it's still a slog and a bad use of environmental resources. Finally, I hope that a northern tier rail option would also allow people who live in/around Boston to much more easily visit us out here and help the tourism economy.

Comment 701

Name: Diane Kanzler
Date: 11/15/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

This is so very needed! I miss this style of rail which I had available to me as MetroNorth in Connecticut. To be able to take a train to any town/city along this proposed route would be a godsend. What is the timeframe if this is approved? Will the rates be reasonable as they are for MetroNorth riders?

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 5 of the report provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process.

Comment 702

Name: Ann Jones
Date: 11/15/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

I think it is an excellent idea to establish rail service from western Massachusetts to Boston. It will make work and travel much more convenient for passengers, it will decrease the now strangling road traffic between Greenfield and Boston, and it will enable passengers to spend much more productive time on board. Other towns might be included on the route: Northampton, say, and Springfield.

Comment 703

Name: Rebecca Reid
Date: 11/15/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

This is desperately needed service. Rail to Boston is one step in the direction of having a functioning public transportation system. I would take the train to Boston gladly, whereas now I just don't go there because of the driving ordeal. It would ease life in the Pioneer Valley in ways we may not even know yet.

Comment 704

Name: Alice Danford
Date: 11/15/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

Please extend a rail line to western Massachusetts. I have to drive over an hour to get the train in Worcester. There is a shortage of health care options in this area so I see a lot of Boston area doctors. Train service would help tremendously. I would probably use it a few times a month.

Comment 705

Name: Ann Ferguson
Date: 11/18/2024
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Comment:

My partner needs to go monthly to Boston from Leverett for medical treatment, and so the extension of commuter rail from Wachusett to Greenfield and hopefully beyond to the Berkshires is something we would really welcome. We would also use it more often to visit Boston for other purposes that we currently do not do because it is onerous, as older citizens, to have to drive all that way and to deal with the difficulty of driving back in rush

hour traffic or in the dark.

MassDOT Response

Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 706

Name: WILLIAM BEMBURY
Date: 11/18/2024
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Comment:

ERVING , MA RTE 2 CENTER WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT LOCATION FOR A RAIL STATION, I.E. NORTHERN TIER CORRIDOR OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS. THE TOWN HAS PARKING WITH EV STATIONS. THE FREIGHT HOUSE ANTIQUES BUILDING IS FOR SALE, AND COULD HOUSE COMMERCIAL BUSINESS WITH A RAIL STATION AND FACILITIES. BEHIND THE FREIGHT HOUSE IS A SCENIC RIVER FRONT PARK, WHICH IS SLATED IN PHASE TWO FOR ADDITIONAL PARKING. THE RAIL IS RIGHT OFF RTE TWO ERVING CENTER AND CURRENTLY HAS FRTA BUS STOP..



1Berkshire Strategic Alliance Inc.
66 Allen Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201
1berkshire.com | 413.499.1600 | berkshires.org

David Mohler
Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Boston, MA 02108

November 6th, 2024

Dear Director Mohler;

As the President and CEO of 1Berkshire, the Regional Economic Development Organization and Regional Tourism Council for the 32 cities and towns of Berkshire County, I write to you to express our full and continued support for the efforts underway to reestablish vitally needed passenger rail service through the Northern Tier project.

The Berkshires has an economy driven by industries that would all greatly benefit from expanded rail service and transportation access. From our incredible educational and healthcare partners to our renowned cultural institutions and outdoor recreation amenities, to our reinvented manufacturing and innovation sectors, the economy of the Berkshires is diverse and dynamic, and in critical need of improved transportation to and from those varied economic drivers. As a region, the Berkshires has invested massive amounts of time, energy, and resources into maintaining and growing our economy, but barriers remain. These include adequate and equitable public transportation into and out of the region.

Our collaborative approach to tackling regional efforts has been formalized and stewarded through various efforts including the *Berkshire Blueprint 2.0*. This 10-year sustained economic development imperative highlights how integral improved and additional rail service into the Berkshires will be in order for our economy to grow to meet the market demands we experience. Through our work, we know new rail service will be a conduit for skilled workforce to stay within the Commonwealth by finding their place in Berkshire County economy. It will create a new and revitalized pipeline of visitorship to our plethora of year-round destinations, including MASS MoCA, Tanglewood, Jiminy Peak, or any number of other world-class destinations. It will provide the needed westward expansion for tech and innovation in the Commonwealth, helping us to realize the benefits of our work on becoming the westernmost hub of the Climate Corridor in Massachusetts and keeping us on track for becoming a rural tech startup and innovation hub along the technology corridor from Boston to Buffalo. It will inspire more students to attend our top-tier public and private institutions (in the Berkshires and throughout the Commonwealth), providing improved and equitable access for students, faculty, and thought leaders. In all ways, the relatively small investment needed to bring Northern Tier rail to life will have a magnitude of impact on the Berkshires, Western Massachusetts, and the entirety of the Commonwealth.

We are at a moment when we can truly realize what equitable investment in transportation for rural communities can be, and the impact it can have on the entirety of the Commonwealth. It is with that needed investment, and this rare opportunity to achieve a project that will significantly impact generations to come, that we put our full support behind the ongoing research, design, and implementation of the Northern Tier rail project.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to bringing this work to bear.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Butler
1Berkshire President & CEO

Made possible by our 1Berkshire Leadership Circle Investors





November 14, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

Nearly 100 strong, we write in **strong support of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project.**

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Passenger Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the Valley Flyer, the residents of our region, outside of the greater Boston area, have proven their commitment to passenger rail. The ridership of this line has exceeded all expectations. We believe the same will be true for Northern Tier Passenger Rail given the ridership projections in the recently released feasibility study.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier Passenger Rail a reality.

Warmest regards,

Note the following list includes entities that have either signed on to this letter and/or sent similar letters directly.

Municipalities

City of Gardner	Town of Heath
City of Greenfield	Town of Hinsdale
City of Northampton	Town of Leverett
Town of Acton	Town of Leyden
Town of Adams	Town of Littleton
Town of Amherst	Town of Montague
Town of Ashburnham	Town of New Salem
Town of Ashfield	Town of North Adams
Town of Athol	Town of Northfield
Town of Bernardston	Town of Orange
Town of Boxborough	Town of Princeton
Town of Buckland	Town of Shelburne
Town of Charlemont	Town of Shutesbury
Town of Cheshire	Town of Sunderland
Town of Clarksburg	Town of Templeton
Town of Colrain	Town of Warwick
Town of Conway	Town of Wendell
Town of Deerfield	Town of Whately
Town of Erving	Town of Williamstown
Town of Gill	Town of Winchendon

Businesses, Business Organizations, Planning Agencies, and Regional Transit Authorities

1Berkshire	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Amherst BID	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce	Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and
Berkshire Innovation Center	Regional Tourism Council

Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Franklin Regional Transit Authority
Greenfield Business Association
Greenfield Cooperative Bank
Greenfield Savings Bank
Ja'Duke Inc.
Lever, Inc.

Mohawk Trail Association Regional Tourism Council
Montachusett Regional Transit Authority
North Central Chamber of Commerce
North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce
Northampton Chamber of Commerce
Orange Municipal Airport
Williamstown Chamber of Commerce

Nonprofit Organizations, Community Organizations, and Cultural Entities

Academy of Music Theatre
Adams Theater
Baystate Franklin Medical Center
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
Emily Dickinson Museum
Eric Carle Museum
Franklin Community Co-op
Franklin County Community Development
Corporation
Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative

Hoosic River Watershed Association
Images Cinema
MassMOCA
Parlor Room Collective/Iron Horse
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
Trains In The Valley
TransitMatters
Valley Community Development
Western Mass Rail Coalition
Williamstown CO2 Lowering Committee
Yiddish Book Center

Educational Institutions

Amherst College
Greenfield Community College
Hampshire College
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Mount Holyoke College
Northfield Mount Hermon
Stoneleigh-Burnham School
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Williams College

cc:

Governor Maura Healey
Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll
Secretary Yvonne Hao, Executive Office of Economic Development
Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Executive Director Kate Fox, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism
Executive Director Michael Bobbit, Mass Cultural Council
Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi
Western Massachusetts Director Kristen Elechko, Office of the Governor

MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary
Draft Final Report – Public Comments (8/13/2024-10/12/2024)

Project Name: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Description: Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Comment 122

Name: Mary Ann Sacco
Date: 08/13/2024
Comment:

I am so excited about the Northern Tier Corridor passenger rail. I appreciate all the hours of work and research that have gone into this planning. I truly feel it will help our community with less people on the roads and more using this type of transportation and it helps the environment as well. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 123

Name: Sean Charles
Date: 08/13/2024
Comment:

I just want to say that I currently am a young professional living in Greenfield and if this project was approved in any form it would greatly increase the chances of me staying in this region and setting down roots here. This would be a great investment from housing, sustainability, economic, and equity perspectives.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 124

Name: Ferron Dooley Fairchild

Date: 08/14/2024

Comment:

I am resident of Turners Falls and the creation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts would have a tremendous positive impact on my life. I commute to Boston for work and personal reasons at least 3 times a month. Being able to use public transportation to make this trip would mean safer, more sustainable, affordable travel for me, my friends and family, and the Franklin county community at large.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and voicing support for expanded rail service.

Comment 125

Name: Holly Stenson

Date: 08/15/2024

Comment:

Rail service from Boston into the Northern Berkshires is a game changer for tourism. Just as the train to Cape Cod and the ferry to Ptown impacted tourism on the cape with less traffic. Not only will this reduce the environmental impact of tourism, but there is plenty to do in the area without the use of a car. More importantly North Adams has had a boom in new population from outside the area that are connected to Boston. As a North Adams resident that travels to Boston several times a month, this service will be used. Much has been said about the ease it would bring to traveling abroad from Boston. Train service will grow the Northern Berkshires community, bringing more people with disposable income to the area. Northern Berkshires needs to continue to grow it's tourism to thrive. I firmly believe train service would grow the economy.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment was a goal that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 126

Name: Neil Stottler

Date: 08/14/2024

Comment:

Hello, This is my public comment for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. I think it's in all our best interest if alternative 3 is chosen. It's the pushing force the MBTA needs to start electrifying the lines especially on the neglected northern branch. When I say electrification I don't mean anything to do with batteries, those are not a good solution for a PROVEN technology such as overhead wire. Alt 3 includes overhead wires and that makes me happy to see that, keep the batteries out of this plan at all costs. I also recommend making sure the trains are running at 80MPH or greater for speeds which is why I think 3 is the best option for a whole bunch of reasons. It allows for better acceleration as seen on caltrain recently. You want to be competitive with driving after all to incentivise people right. The cost per mile is also surprisingly not too expensive for complete electrification compared to other projects. Please please please pick option 3 as it's the best for all of us now and in the future.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 127

Name: Michael Lovett

Date: 08/15/2024

Comment:

I think this project has the potential to make a massively positive impact on this area of Mass, the state in general, and the New England region. While cost is always something that should be carefully considered, dismissing or forgoing this project because of its perceived return on investment discounts the incalculable value it will provide to the current accessibility of the state and the future of Massachusetts especially in the face of daunting climate goals. Barring safety or massive environmental risks, this project is a no brainer and the price is a result of us divesting from rail travel in the first place. It's a price that should be paid. This is tax dollars being put to good use.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 128

Name: Dave Stevenson

Date: 08/15/2024

Comment:

The Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART TD) strongly supports the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project, recognizing its potential to bring significant economic, environmental, and safety benefits to Massachusetts. We endorse all proposed options for the project, emphasizing its importance in modernizing transportation infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life in the region. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project promises to stimulate economic growth by creating good union jobs both during and after construction. However, it is crucial that Massachusetts ensures all contractors adhere to the state's labor standards, including compliance with the Massachusetts Earned Sick Time Law and the Paid Family Medical Leave Law. Currently, major operators like AMTRAK and Keolis do not fully comply with these laws, which must be addressed to uphold worker rights and fairness in the industry. Improved rail connectivity will attract investments, boost local businesses, and provide residents with better access to employment opportunities. For a region that has faced underinvestment, this project offers a much-needed economic resurgence, contributing to a more prosperous future. Rail travel is one of the most energy-efficient and environmentally friendly transportation options available. By reducing the reliance on cars and decreasing traffic congestion, the project will lower greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the fight against climate change. The environmental sustainability of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project aligns perfectly with SMART TD's commitment to promoting greener transportation solutions. Rail travel is statistically safer than road travel, and the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project will enhance public safety by providing a reliable alternative to driving. Additionally, the project will improve accessibility for all residents, particularly those without access to a car, ensuring that everyone can benefit from improved transportation options. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project represents an important step forward for the region. SMART TD is committed to supporting its development, confident in its potential to deliver economic growth, environmental sustainability, and enhanced public safety. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to bring Regional Rail and Compass Rail to life, ensuring a brighter and more connected future for Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 129

Name: Adam Goldstein

Date: 08/15/2024

Comment:

For the planners and politicians reading this who drove to work today alone in their 2,000 lb pieces of metal that increasingly clog up deteriorating state roads, that gobble up green space for parking and generally decrease the quality of life: think about a future where people have the option to enjoy other parts of the state without driving—a resource that

could even eventually reduce the number of motor vehicles in households. Unlike every other state, the power, money and influence in Massachusetts is centered and stacked in the largest city. Give some mobility and economic assistance to the people that grow food and take care of the land in the western part of the state; provide an option for the coastal and political elites in Boston to visit Western Massachusetts relaxing in a train car. The two economies would benefit in both directions.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Chapter 6 of the report outlines recommended next steps and potential short-term efforts to increase mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and voice support for expanded rail service.

Comment 130

Name: Joseph Smith

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

You can't maintain the infrastructure you have now. You should not expand it. Also commutes of that length won't be taken by anyone. Offices don't need to be the economic hub so don't build this as the office goes away.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 131

Name: Josh Fredette

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I believe that this project would greatly benefit our area. I have clients in Boston and I would take a train if there were a reliable one that ran multiple times a day .

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 132

Name: Sarah Kleinschmidt

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I am an emergency physician in Greenfield and am writing in support of implementation for any of the considered options. We have a crucial lack of public transit in the region, which has significant impacts on the ability to access appropriate healthcare. Many residents miss appointments with specialists in Boston that are not available locally. Many more would benefit from increased access to mental health or substance use programs that are geographically inaccessible. I urge you to consider these health benefits to the current and future residents.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience and that of your fellow residents. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 133

Name: Evan Fox

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I would love to see this route come to fruition as there currently is a huge shortage of efficient transit options to get from Franklin County to Boston. Arriving in North Station for a Celtics game would be amazing! Also to see the route continue west and utilize the historic Hoosac tunnel would be so cool! In the mean time a bus that follows this route would be amazing. Electric should be the way to go, we should be using newer greener technologies, not going backwards! Also, I am all for local stops. We should make it accessible to as many folks as possible, and it would allow more different route options

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing support for alternative 3 electrified service and those that incorporate local stops. Chapter 6 of the report outlines recommended next steps and potential short-term efforts. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 134

Name: Robert Adams

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

This is an investment for the state to expand economic opportunity to the western part of the state. Making it possible for more people to have affordable housing in central and

western MA and still work in the greater Boston area. It will also allow tourist opportunities for both sides of the state and reduce parking issues and pollution issues. With an affordable housing market in western MA it will long term increase the tax rolls locally and for the state overall. This is something that needs to happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As noted in Chapter 6, there are strong connections between transportation and housing. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts about expanded rail service.

Comment 135

Name: Kala Fisher

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I am a Selectperson in the Town of Athol. I want to strongly advocate for this project. Expanding the Passenger Rail would lead to so many opportunities in the Western part of the State. This could allow people to work outside of their living areas and also cut back on the Route 2, I495, and I95 traffic corridors. The opportunities would be endless for our area as well as Berkshire and Franklin Counties. Please support this study and move forward with it.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 136

Name: Hans Rickheit

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

As a resident of Orange, Mass. I am very hopeful for a public transportation rail line to be installed. I am also deeply hopeful that a Rail Station would be installed in our town. It would be transformative to our economy. Adding the ecological benefits of reduced carbon emissions of more people opting for a train instead of a car,, I think the longterm benefits would greatly outweigh the initial expenses! I wholeheartedly endorse this endeavor!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of

service alternatives. As part of any future project development, station stops would be evaluated. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 137

Name: Joseph Morrow

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I believe a station at Gardener would benefit daily commuters to Boston. Extending Electrification to Boston North Station would also be very beneficial in order to speed up the commuter between Wauchusett and Boston. Electrification would be much more beneficial for the rest of the line in order to reduce maintenance expenses. The MBTA should not be under the assumption that they will electrify the line due to their continuous procrastination of the fairmount line electrification. Both this study, and the east west rail project should be done in conjunction with one another. This will create a brand new way to get from one end of the state to the other. Trains could also utilize the grand junction branch in order to serve the under utilized North Station Amtrak lines. Electrification of the Worcester branch and out to Springfield would be a must, as well as electrification on the Hartford line and route of the Valley flyer to create more options for Amtrak passengers from Springfield, New York, and Vermont.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, and thoughts about electrification. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 138

Name: Joseph McNamara

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

This rail line would be huge for the area. I hope they build it and it has a stop in Athol and Greenfield. It would grow the area economically

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts about expanded rail service.

Comment 139

Name: Michael Steele

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

I'm very happy with this proposal. My sister lives in Athol, MA and I live near Porter Square. She really struggles to drive in the city with the traffic. This would be a way to see her more often. I also have seen her area of the state struggle to support new businesses. It needs revitalization and this proposal is a great suggestion for that.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study, and promoting transportation equity was a goal that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for sharing your experience.

Comment 140

Name: Richard Patoski

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

the alternative 3 does not make economic sense since the travel time under both Alternatives is the the same. The most economic sensible alternative is Alternative 2 together with the double tracking through Waltham and the running of rush hour express service from/to Fitchburg.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 141

Name: Robert Disbrow

Date: 08/16/2024

Comment:

As a returning Massachusetts resident from New Hampshire, now living in Greenfield, this is exactly the development that I hope to see in my home state. This would enable us to make more frequent trips to Boston to visit family without having to stay overnight or drive home late at night from Wachusett. I believe this service would improve my town and make us more connected with the rest of the state. A thought for those who prefer driving: reducing car dependency means more road for you! I'd love to get off the road but we need viable alternatives.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience and thoughts.

Comment 142**Name:** Beth Hatstat**Date:** 08/16/2024**Comment:**

I would love to see a passenger rail stop in athol or orange. I have been waiting for this!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Alternatives 3 and 4 included potential stops in Athol. Additional stops would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. Thank you for sharing your experience and thoughts.

Comment 143**Name:** Alicia Canary**Date:** 08/16/2024**Comment:**

Many households in North Adams are car free. Having regular service to Boston and even the pioneer valley will be immensely helpful to our residents.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options was an objective for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 144**Name:** Bob Oelfke**Date:** 08/16/2024**Comment:**

This would be a huge boom to orange mass that needs business and growth. Rail comes right through.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 145**Name:** Walter Wrigley

Date: 08/17/2024

Comment:

Yes, northern rail to serve northern western mass is essential!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 146

Name: Rachel Gunther

Date: 08/17/2024

Comment:

I think this would be an incredible asset to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Good for commuters, for tourism, for decreasing traffic - endless possibilities! It's time for Massachusetts to start getting back to public transportation infrastructure comparable to what is going on in the EU. We can do it if they can do it!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations, and increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 147

Name: Edward Burnham

Date: 08/17/2024

Comment:

Alternative 4 Local service with a stop in Gardner is the way to go.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 4 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 148

Name: Samuel Baker

Date: 08/17/2024

Comment:

As a resident of the Greenfield area, having access to a fast and reliable means to get to Boston without driving would be a tremendous benefit. One of the largest benefits for me would be to be able to travel to Logan airport without having to either find/pay for a ride for a 4 hour round trip, twice, or pay to park in Boston. I strongly support the high speed options, reaching Boston in two hours would be ideal, if it took substantially longer to travel by train, I would be more likely to still drive. While I have family in the Albany NY area, that rail line would be of limited use to us based on limited public transit in the Albany area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts about expanded rail service in Massachusetts and your experience.

Comment 149

Name: Cindy-Lu Fitch

Date: 08/17/2024

Comment:

I support a rail line extension from Boston to the western part of Massachusetts. I believe it could expand job opportunities for folks that would otherwise not be able to easily access Boston and other communities in between North Adams or another western Massachusetts town and Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to voice your support for expanded rail service.

Comment 150

Name: Amy Stanwick

Date: 08/18/2024

Comment:

This would be fantastic! We need more commuting and travel options. Let's use the resources we already have to make these improvements.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 151

Name: Thiago Teixeira

Date: 08/18/2024

Comment:

I fully support the rail extension project with a strong preference for an electrified line. This will be transformative for the communities served and benefit the entire state. In addition to the extension to Albany, I would suggest also a connection to Springfield to potentially close the loop if the other East-West rail comes to fruition.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Regarding connection to Springfield, the Amtrak Vermonter service provides connections between Greenfield and Springfield.

Comment 152

Name: Noreen Fish

Date: 08/18/2024

Comment:

I am not interested in having the train built out into the beautiful countryside like Shelburn Falls area the Mohawk Trail area that is so beautiful and natural. Trains would bring in traffic, people, and also spoil the rural landscape and natural beauty and its history. Some of these beautiful areas are natural habitats for a lot of animal species. I'd like to keep it that way.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts. Further assessment of potential impacts and mitigation opportunities may be examined as part of any future permitting or project development.

Comment 153

Name: Kyle Bubp

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

As a Littleton resident, I fully support the expansion. We are regular riders of the commuter rail to Boston, it would be excellent to go West as well.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 154**Name:** Sheila McCormick**Date:** 08/19/2024**Comment:**

While the attractions of a trip to Boston are many, the increasingly difficult snarl of traffic (beginning around Leominster) is daunting. The prospect becomes more challenging who the elderly, who would still like to partake of the cultural offerings of the city without the expense of parking and the cutthroat nature of Boston traffic. Please fast track what should have happened 20 years ago—convenient train service from Western MA to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Chapter 5 outlines the process for passenger rail planning and implementation and Chapter 6 outlines recommended next steps and potential short-term efforts. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 155**Name:** Stephen Roylance**Date:** 08/19/2024**Comment:**

The traffic along route 2 is only getting worse. Housing costs are pushing people out of metro west and into central and western Massachusetts. More transit options are desperately needed. The reliability of the commuter rail service needs to improve as well. The new tracks must be well maintained to allow fast and reliable service.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 156**Name:** Adam Sweet**Date:** 08/19/2024**Comment:**

I have been an advocate for high speed rail between Massachusetts cities and the more active counties for more than 3 decades. Politics always gets in the way. Boston gets the lion's share of budget dollars, while the rest of the state makes due with the scraps. Don't get me wrong, I grew up in the Boston area and appreciate the many improvements. I just

wish they would be more democratic in how they allocate funds.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 157

Name: Ryan Griffis

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

Regional access to statewide transit options is tantamount to the success of this project and ensuing residents can fully utilize this service. This includes transportation oriented development and consistent, and far-ranging services. Connecting Albany, and as many stations in connected towns/cities is critical, with the fastest service possible. If driving a car is faster, it is unlikely to achieve total buy-in and use from community members.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for alternative 5 Albany Extension. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 158

Name: Richard Keleher

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

I urge that you adopt Alternative 3, Electrification. Do NOT adopt Alternative 1; the travel time is too slow! And, consider seriously adopting the alternative the extends to Albany.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 159

Name: Killian Stewart

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

This would be sick because I can go get a burger or something in Boston if I get bored of this valley!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 160

Name: Janice Fennelly

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

Yes, please connect the poor communities of western Ma to the affluent eastern Ma. This will be life blood for our region. It will enable people to spread out and solve the housing crisis. Let's do this!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for taking the time to voice your support for expanded rail service.

Comment 161

Name: Jonathan DeWitt

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

I have grown up my whole life between Leominster and Orange, and I would love to see service expanded past the Wachusett station. I believe connecting passenger rail service to North Adams or even to Albany would greatly benefit the region, providing additional tourism, commuter options, and reduced strain on route 2 which has become increasingly crowded over the years.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 162

Name: Crispin Youngberg

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

I live in Greenfield and travel to Boston regularly to visit friends, attend events, or fly out of Logan. It would make my life so much better to be able to do this journey by train. More regular service makes more of a difference to me than speed. Also more station stops would increase the use of the service. Also it's very important to me that it is easy and

cheap to take bicycles on the train.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective of this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 163

Name: Robert Dobias

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

Electrifying is an absurd option. Overall there is no economic payback. As Comm of Mass faces economic doom with loss of high income citizens and the gain of no income illegal immigrants, there is no economic justification of this hugely expensive capital project. Focus expenditures on economic development on all communities outside of the 128 "Economic entitlement zone". Our government has starved the outlying Greater Boston areas for long enough.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving mobility options for Western Massachusetts was an objective of this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 164

Name: Rachel Stavely Hale

Date: 08/19/2024

Comment:

I would like to suggest Alternative 4 as the strongest of the options. More stops makes it easier to attract more riders.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for alternative 4. Thank you for taking the time.

Comment 165

Name: Jim Kolesar

Date: 08/20/2024

Comment:

Thank you for all your careful work on this important project. If the service existed now, I would definitely use it a dozen times a year to visit family, and occasionally for other reasons as well. I think the extension to Albany is significantly less important, not just to my household but to the region.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options in Western and Eastern Massachusetts and improving connectivity and access to destinations were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts about Alternative 5. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 166

Name: Ashley Sparks

Date: 08/20/2024

Comment:

Great idea for Greenfield and North Adams but not for Shelburne Falls. As a resident of Shelburne Falls I believe this would cause damage to my town. Tourism has caused many issues, from no affordable housing left for families, to the lack of support for other parts of our economy such as agriculture. Our community is small and rural, the over all negative effects of a stop in Shelburne Falls will be vast to many of its residents. There is a huge effort to support tourism in our area, many of whom don't live locally. Some tourism is fine in reasonable amounts, but it needs to be done carefully with input from a wide variety of residents (not just a select few who profit from tourism).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 167

Name: Maddie Lerner

Date: 08/20/2024

Comment:

This rail is so needed and would get heavy use! I have been taking Peter Pan buses from Boston to Northampton which sometimes require a transfer in Hartford, which is so inefficient. It would be amazing to have a route that was more direct.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Please note that the proposed service would travel north of

Northampton, serving Greenfield. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experience. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 168

Name: Drew David

Date: 08/20/2024

Comment:

This could totally change the economic and demographic landscape of the region for the better! It could also reduce car dependency, benefit the environment, and help Massachusetts meet it's climate goals. I fully support this!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 169

Name: Steven Paris

Date: 08/21/2024

Comment:

All I can say is: about time and a wonderful idea! I have wondered for years why the Fitchburg line stopped in the middle of the state instead of continuing to communities in Western Massachusetts. I recall that even under MBTA operation, the line used to go to Athol, I believe. This is a project that is well worth the investment. In an ideal world, the line would be double-tracked, electrified, extended all the way to Albany, and stop in as many communities as possible. But it's preferable to at least start with SOMETHING, ANYTHING: diesel powered if necessary, extended just to North Adams, single-tracked in sections, and fewer stations. The line can be extended, electrified and double-tracked if and when additional funding becomes available. Service to the Mohawk Trail, Mass MOCA in North Adams and many other communities and places of interest would provide access we don't currently have. There is one thing missing in this proposal: connecting the northern tier to the southern tier. First, A light rail or modest diesel service between Fitchburg and Worcester, possibly extended north to New Hampshire and south to Providence could provide great connectivity in the central part of the state, including access to Worcester airport. That service would connect to existing rail in Worcester (including the Lake Shore Limited) and Fitchburg. Second, an additional north-south corridor from Brattleboro to Greenfield, Amherst, Springfield, Windsor Locks and Hartford would provide connectivity in the Connecticut Valley. That would connect the northern tier service to planned southern tier service, Lake Shore Limited service in Springfield and Bradley airport. There are so many things to see and do in this corridor including historic Deerfield, the Big E and Basketball Hall of Fame, and other attractions. Finally, a third north-south connection between Williamstown, through North Adams, to Pittsfield, Lenox, Lee, and Great

Barrington would provide access to all the cultural and historic attractions in the Berkshires such as the The Mount, Hancock Shaker Village, Tanglewood, Normal Rockwell Museum, Williams College and so forth. I attended RPI in Troy, NY and I know the roads and transportation options in western Massachusetts. They're slow and limited mainly to private cars. Restoring our once-great rail system is a very worthy goal. I urge you to think big, or at least as big as funding permits. Thank-you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 170

Name: Zack DesJardins

Date: 08/20/2024

Comment:

Hi Makaela, Thank you for your work on the Northern Tier Passenger Rail study! I have a few questions for you about it. First, was 79 mph top speed evaluated for the Pan Am Southern portion of the line? If not, why not? For the Albany extension, why wasn't the Canadian Pacific's Colonie Main Line tracks between Mechanicville and Albany studied instead of running the train around Schenectady? There are two missing track connections but one was ripped out decades ago and the other would require a short reverse move onto Amtrak's line to Albany station. Lastly, it is great that five daily roundtrips were studied but was there any consideration of starting with 1-2 trips to reduce the initial capital cost? Thanks, Zack DesJardins

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Allowable speeds along the corridor, challenges related to a shared freight-passenger rail corridor, grades, and alignment curvature all have impacts on train speeds, as noted in Chapter 3. Regarding Alternative 5, please note that this alternative proposes service between North Adams and Albany via Schenectady. Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies.

Comment 171

Name: Lila Jacobs

Date: 08/22/2024

Comment:

This would be amazing! I live in Somerville and I don't have a car and I would love to be able to access the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley. I think more small stops would be great too, like one in Erving.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Station stops would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. Chapter 5 details the process for passenger rail service and implementation. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 172

Name: Danielle Caisse

Date: 08/23/2024

Comment:

I would instead MassDOT focus on full local service rather than an Albany extension. As someone with family and personal ties to central Massachusetts, I know many people who live either in Athol or nearby who take the Commuter Rail to Wachusett and then have to drive 30 minutes home. A stop in Athol would be revolutionary for these people. Not to mention the potential for economic development in Athol, especially with a train station so close to downtown! MassDOT should still consider stations in Gardner, Baldwinville, and Orange. A train nearly mirroring Route 2 from Leominster to Orange would open up a whole new way for people in these communities to travel, especially if coupled with better RTA service. I also highly encourage MassDOT to keep Shelburne Falls on the map for Bridge of Flower tourism! I am excited about the opportunity to not only take the train home to central Massachusetts to visit family but also to go further to places I could only visit by car before.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 4 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 173

Name: Mark Rambacher

Date: 08/23/2024

Comment:

Please make sure the line is electrified (and probably not batteries!) the entire way. The option extending to Albany makes more sense as it opens up more possibilities for travel to more locations.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for alternative 3 electrified service and alternative 5 Albany extension. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. Thank you for taking the time.

Comment 174

Name: Marnie Anair

Date: 08/23/2024

Comment:

Expanding the rail would be a great opportunity for folks in western MA! I know people who commute into Greater Boston that would be able to take the train in, rather than driving. It would also be easier to visit family, and go to the city for a day visit as well.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 175

Name: Pete Dillman

Date: 08/24/2024

Comment:

This would be great for the region and I am in full support despite not being in the main area of benefit.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support.

Comment 176

Name: Amy Lord

Date: 08/24/2024

Comment:

Western Mass would greatly benefit from public transportation. Please consider this portion of the state when considering new routes

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options for Western Massachusetts was an

objective for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to voice your support for expanded rail service in Massachusetts.

Comment 177

Name: Alden Dreyer

Date: 08/25/2024

Comment:

As a former passenger between North Adams and Boston, and a retired career B&M RR employee, I can not help but thinking this study is designed to fail on its complexity, timelines and cost. Much more relevant would be using the Downeaster model and restoring service to Greenfield. Upgrading the track to at least Class 4, replacing double steel on Ashburnham Hill, fixing East Deerfield congestion, and installing PTC could be done in a matter of a few years. Using the Greenfield station as is (with the building open at train times) would be a no-brainer as would a daily train from Boston to Montreal. After that was accomplished and running well, then would be the time to investigate an extension to North Adams (my mother grew up there), and more double track, super elevation, etc. And, yes, there are long stretches between Fitchburg and Greenfield where passenger trains could run safely at 79 MPH.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Allowable speeds along the corridor, challenges related to a shared freight-passenger rail corridor, grades, and alignment curvature all have impacts on train speeds, as noted in Chapter 3. Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies.

Comment 178

Name: Erik Hoffner

Date: 08/25/2024

Comment:

I'm fully in support of the Northern Tier passenger rail project, we could really use a rail connection like this between western and eastern Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and support for expanded rail service.

Comment 179

Name: Andrew Kurowski

Date: 08/25/2024

Comment:

This would be so amazing, I would be so excited to be able to go to/from Boston on rail!!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 180

Name: Mary Johnson

Date: 08/25/2024

Comment:

Please support revitalizing western Mass by connecting a modern passenger rail from Williamstown to Boston. I am a remote worker, living in Ashfield, and Founder of a global nonprofit. I frequently commuted to the larger cities of NYC, DC and Boston. I would love the option of taking the rail in to Boston from here. Now that Uber is a commonly used service, the possibilities for connecting western Mass w Boston are incredibly possible and remote workers could easily commute part time into city businesses.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Station stops would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and thoughts.

Comment 181

Name: Phyllis Lawrence

Date: 08/26/2024

Comment:

This makes sense to me as we try to make use of existing infrastructure to provide accessible public transportation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 182

Name: Elaine Reardon

Date: 08/26/2024

Comment:

I like many others, love what Boston has to offer us, be it a special visit to the North End, Chinatown or similar places for some incredible food, a trip to visit family, take a course, visit the cemetery, or make a hospital visit. Traffic for driving to Boston is now nuts, and Boston is one of the worst places traffic-wise in the country. YOU can't really make a visit when you'd need to return to West of Fitchburg by 2:30- if you want to avoid the rush hour. Of course, you'd still have slowed traffic. I used to be able to avoid some traffic if I were a bit north of Boston by traveling north to 495 and then going south, but 495 is now almost as clogged as 495. Of course I've missed Boston for it's culture but this also has health implications as well. It's become extremely difficult to visit Boston Hospital doctors. It would really impact our lives to great benefit if you'd give us a Northern tier, AND made stops in Garden and Athol. Thank you for your consideration.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Station stops would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 183

Name: Heather Berlin
Date: 08/26/2024
Comment:

This would be HUGE for us. My husband is a patient at Dana Farber, with regular weekly or more frequent appointments. We live in Warwick, MA. Thank you to all who are working to make this happen

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 184

Name: Joseph Laur
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

This would be a wonderful development, connecting western MA more closely to the eastern portion of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access was an objective for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 185

Name: Anna Boysen

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

I think this is a wonderful idea- it will take cars off the road and enable people without cars to get places with greater ease. The bus system in the northern part of the state is missing ease.... My concern would be that the schedule would limited.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Schedule patterns would be evaluated as part of any future project development. Chapter 5 of the report details the passenger rail implementation and planning process. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 186

Name: Juan Vasquez

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

Please bring back commuter rail from North Adams to Boston

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 187

Name: Artie Carpenter

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

Reinstating passenger rail along along the northern tier represents a rare opportunity to reduce the need for cars. Wasting such an opportunity would be complete shame.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 188

Name: Juyin Wang
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

We need a more direct way to commute to Boston since PeterPan bus line was cancelled.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 189

Name: Charlie Tharas
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

I am a student at Williams College that would greatly benefit from easy, reliable, frequent rail access to Boston, MA for access to conventions, academic institutions and resources, job opportunities, and leisure. I know that this project would not be completed by my graduation, but know that future students would enjoy the same benefits. Rail infrastructure used to tie this country together affordably and reliably--I shouldn't need to own a \$30,000 vehicle on top of (up to) \$80,000 tuition to enjoy my region.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and voicing support for expanded rail service in Massachusetts.

Comment 190

Name: Tara Olney
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

Please bring passenger trains back from Boston to North Adams!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 191

Name: Tracy Novick
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

I LOVE this idea! It is such a beautiful part of the state; being able to travel it by rail would be an amazing benefit! Also: yes please to more trains!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking time to voice support for expanded rail service.

Comment 192

Name: Nicholas Bauer

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

We need to set a standard for public transportation. The whole state should be accessible by public transportation, with a *maximum* of 1 hour drive from any station stop. I imagine this route would also be a great Fall/Winter tourism route with appropriate advertising.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 193

Name: Joe Favini

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

I am extremely enthusiastic about the prospect of commuter rail between North Adams and Boston and wish to voice my support for this proposal.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Please note that given the intercity nature of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, Amtrak provides most U.S. intercity rail service and possesses a statutory right to operate on any other railroad in the country and would likely operate Northern Tier service. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 194

Name: Karen Benko

Date: 08/27/2024

Comment:

Train service from northern Berkshire County to Boston would improve my life both personally and professionally.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 195

Name: Ruth Flohr
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

This route to Boston would be a blessing to Western Massachusetts seniors who are no longer able to make the drive to Boston, but still would like to or need to.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 196

Name: Benjamin Ewing
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

Rail service along this corridor would be very useful for me and my family to get to Boston. We currently drive this route once or twice a month and would much prefer to ride a train to avoid traffic and parking hassles.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 197

Name: Bethany Sherwood
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

Providing passenger rail from Boston to the Berkshires would not only be a competitive option for travelers, but would decrease road congestion and lessen the environmental impact of vehicles on the road. Rail is affordable, safe, and fast, and that is what Massachusetts travelers deserve!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 198

Name: Alisa Beer
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

I fully support the construction of more passenger rail along the northern tier corridor of western Massachusetts. Getting across the state right now is prohibitively difficult, time consuming, and expensive for anyone without a car and driving is frankly a huge waste of time compared to being able to take a train on which one can work, read, knit, or sleep.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 199

Name: Emily Stewart
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

getting out to western Mass right now requires an awful patchwork of buses. having a train out there would be amazing, especially if a sour line could later be put in from Greenfield down to Northampton and Springfield!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Regarding connection to Springfield, PVTa and the Amtrak Vermonter service provide connections between Greenfield and Springfield. Chapter 5 of the report outlines the planning and implementation process for passenger rail service and Chapter 6 outlines recommended next steps. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 200

Name: E Naomi Twery
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

Passenger rail service between the Berkshires and Boston would be great, both for its riders and for the hopefully lighter traffic on I-90. I would also love to see a reasonable rail

connection between northern Vermont and Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Regarding connections to Vermont, Amtrak Vermonter service may connect to planned West-East service in Springfield or could connect to potential Northern Tier service in Greenfield.

Comment 201

Name: John Aste
Date: 08/27/2024
Comment:

I support this project wholeheartedly. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail would allow me, as a student at Williams College, to avoid the significant inconveniences of having to go to either Pittsfield or Albany to access intercity rail. The line between North Adams and Boston would link thousands of students at Williams, MCLA, and Bennington College to Boston, facilitating easier travel and encouraging a more diverse array of students to attend these universities (particularly those who might otherwise be reluctant to go somewhere so remote for their education).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations, and increasing mobility options were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 202

Name: Susan Stinson
Date: 08/28/2024
Comment:

It is currently easier to get from Northampton, MA to New York, NY by rail than it is to get to Boston. Much easier. I don't own a car, so I always use public transportation to go to cities for research, conferences, and readings related to my work as a writer, or for cultural events. Bus transportation has become less available over the past few years. And every time train access has been expanded in Northampton, it has been widely used, including by the area's many college students. We need east/west rail.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 203

Name: Romie Faienza

Date: 08/28/2024

Comment:

This would be great! Just last weekend I traveled by car from Boston to the Berkshires (and back), partly to see a train museum and partly to see Mass MoCA. If I could have done that by rail instead, I would have.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 204

Name: Irene Yang

Date: 08/28/2024

Comment:

The passenger rail would make it significantly easier to travel to and from school. I have to commute frequently multiple times a year and this make it much more accessible

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 205

Name: Anne Goodwin

Date: 08/28/2024

Comment:

I work at the state's only public liberal arts college, in North Adams. Having a time-effective train option would give more students from outside Berkshire County the opportunity to attend if they still want to go home regularly! I would take the train to Boston for regular visits too...

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 206

Name: Brian Ferrarotti

Date: 08/29/2024

Comment:

While I'm definitely in favor of passenger trains in most any form, I struggle to see how any of the alternatives provided in the study would be a wise use of state rail funding. It was refreshing to find a scenario where electrified service has a pretty clear financial advantage over the other alternatives. Electrified passenger rail needs to be taken more seriously at a state level due to their numerous benefits that half-measures like battery electric trains cannot come close to. However, because none of the alternatives had a positive cost-benefit ratio, I think a full build out to North Adams shouldn't be pursued too seriously. I think the most damning figure here is how the best-case comparison between a full-build alternative and services like the Downeaster has Northern Tier Passenger Rail with triple the per rider cost. I understand the study was authorized to explicitly study out this far, but I would be curious if a truncated route of some kind would be a better interim plan. An intercity rail route to Greenfield or even just some kind of improvements to the Fitchburg Line (along with bus routes as mentioned in the report) would go further towards transit in the area sooner. Due to the possibilities for transfers with existing Amtrak service, I think Greenfield should be considered as the realistic endpoint for such a service in the near to mid-term.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for alternative 3 electrified service. Chapter 5 of the report provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process, and Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 207

Name: Karen Kelly

Date: 08/29/2024

Comment:

From a tourism and job market posture, there are plenty of attractions that would bring metro Boston residents to the Pioneer Valley and, overtime, east coast residents may even reconsider their options on where they want to live and work! Unfounded misconceptions about rural communities and urban bias, replaced by a more accurate insight into how pleasant and tranquil rural communities are!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 208

Name: David Luongo

Date: 08/30/2024

Comment:

As a student without a car, getting around Western Mass can be tremendously difficult. I can think of plenty of times that a northern tier passenger rail would have made it easier to access educational and professional opportunities. Whatever alternative is chosen, it needs to happen! Thanks for doing this important work.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 209

Name: Paul Wiele

Date: 08/31/2024

Comment:

Please do not pick the "low-investment" Alternative 1. To make an impact on reducing pollution, improving travel, and generally being seen as a useful public service, you need to make sure that taking the train is at least as fast as driving. I would also ideally like to see some version of this route connect to Brattleboro, which has infrequent north-south Amtrak service that goes through Greenfield, but requires a long layover in Springfield or New Haven to get to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Comment 210

Name: Rose Anderson-Gips

Date: 09/01/2024

Comment:

I am very glad that the state is considering public transportation improvements/additions- specifically rail service- to the Northern Tier Corridor. I live in Deerfield and travel to Boston for extended time periods. For logistical and environmental reasons, I prefer to use as much public transportation as possible. Currently, the bus and train schedules (transferring in Springfield) are very limited, and therefore I am either spending a huge amount of time on public transit or I am using a car instead. I would be THRILLED if there was rail service between Greenfield and Boston! On a personal level this would help me in the short term, and for our state I believe that investing in rail service is imperative for

reducing our dependence on individual vehicles, as it relates to climate change and air pollution. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 211

Name: A. Sarkar
Date: 09/03/2024
Comment:

I would benefit personally from the Fitchburg line being extended to Greenfield. I also believe many more people will benefit from a rail corridor between Boston and North Adams. I personally frequently travel along the Fitchburg line (typically multiple times a month) and travel north to Vermont or Canada via public transportation several times a year. Extending the commuter rail from Boston to Greenfield allows for connections to the Vermonter, and similarly allows people in western MA to make Amtrak connections in Boston (ex. the Downeaster). Route 2 is very well traveled, and extending the commuter rail such that people may stop at any point along the line (and not just in Boston) would be very helpful for many different types of people, not just commuters to the cities or the suburbs but also those who cannot drive but need to travel a fair distance and those who are traveling for leisure. Schedule timings lining up with RTAs would also be ideal for those without cars.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Given the intercity nature of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, please note that Amtrak provides most U.S. intercity rail service and possesses a statutory right to operate on any other railroad in the country. Potential stopping patterns would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process, and Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 212

Name: Michael Sokolovsky
Date: 09/03/2024
Comment:

I'm a franklin county resident who moved to the area for affordable housing despite still having a full time job in Boston. I know many other working professionals who would benefit from having fast train transportation along the northern tier. I have colleagues who

have shared with me that they would move to the area if such a line existed. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail would be a great enticement for bringing younger working professionals like myself and families to the area. It will also encourage more tourism from the Boston area, which is a growing cornerstone of the Franklin county's economy. I support the most expansive Northern Tier Passenger rail proposal, and I believe that its costs are far outweighed by the economic, family, working, and quality of life benefits it will provide to our county. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal for this study that guided the development of alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and that of your colleagues. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 213

Name: Victoria McCormick
Date: 09/03/2024
Comment:

Our family would be very glad to use the train from Greenfield to Boston!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 214

Name: Maya Rogler
Date: 09/03/2024
Comment:

As a resident of Western Mass (Shelburne Falls), it seems nonsensical that it is easier for us to get to New York City on the train than our own, Boston! A route from North Adams through Greenfield to Boston would be excellent for connecting these two unique and awesome parts of our state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access was an objective for this study and promoting transportation equity was a goal that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 215

Name: Carl Mckinney

Date: 09/03/2024

Comment:

While I understand the North Adams to Albany, NY route is more expensive, it has the greatest impact on the economies and ability to rail commute to where the high tech jobs are with a reasonable commute. The rights of way exist currently. Folks in North Adams are not going to work in Boston and travel via rail. Additionally, it allows all of the communities from Greenfield westward to participate in expanded economic and cultural endeavors better than any other proposed route.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 216

Name: Christopher Macek

Date: 09/04/2024

Comment:

I would love to have train service across the route 2 corridor into Boston. I've lived in Shelburne Falls for over 20 years and been working off and on with companies and customers in Boston and the commute is difficult and tiresome. Public rail transportation would be a game changer for me and the local economy in Western Mass. PLEASE BUILD THIS RAIL SERVICE!!! THANK YOU!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 217

Name: Elizabeth Dickinson

Date: 09/04/2024

Comment:

I write to support the implementation of the Northern Tier Rail line. It will provide critical, environmentally responsible, service to those in Western Massachusetts who travel to the eastern part of the state for services (e.g., medical and technical), cultural and tourist activities, employment, transportation connections, and for other reasons. It will also provide access to the resources to Western Mass for those traveling from the eastern part of the state. Critical to the success of the system will be reliable and appropriate schedules, safe and convenient waiting areas, and coordination with transportation

services and hubs at each stop. It would make no sense to have a railway that is not linked effectively to the populations and locations (e.g., airports, medical centers, cultural resources) it is intended to service.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process, and Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 218

Name: Walker Powell

Date: 09/09/2024

Comment:

This is an essential step forward for the Northern Tier region of western Massachusetts, and I strongly support the implementation of this plan, with frequent stops in accessible communities. As a planner in a Franklin County town and a resident of another, I can list a whole host of benefits that this project would bring to our small towns. Given the high cost-benefit results for the all-electric option, I encourage you to strongly consider this to protect the beautiful environment of our area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 219

Name: Leslie Cooper

Date: 09/09/2024

Comment:

Yes for rail service between Noston and North Adams

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 220

Name: Todd Dewkett

Date: 09/09/2024

Comment:

We currently drive an hour and a half to get on the train to go to Boston. We would go more often if the train was closer.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your current travel experience.

Comment 221

Name: Virginia Desorgher

Date: 09/10/2024

Comment:

Hello, My name is Virginia Desorgher, and I am honored to serve as Mayor of the City of Greenfield. Thank you for the opportunity to submit public testimony regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This project is essential for the state and the Franklin County region. The Northern Tier Rail would be a game-changer for our community. Its benefits are numerous, but I want to spotlight some that stand out in particular. Public transportation in Franklin County has remained a challenge. The Franklin Regional Transit Authority provides excellent service to our community, including the recent addition of weekend transit. However, Franklin County is still behind in alternative transportation options compared to Eastern Massachusetts. The Northern Tier Rail would represent a terrific step forward for regional equity. It would provide accessible and affordable transportation for everyone in the Franklin County region, unlocking a level of optionality that would benefit the community tremendously. Residents could regularly commute to Central or Eastern Massachusetts for work or enjoy trips to our state's terrific landmarks. A rail service would also support the state and nation's sustainability goals by reducing carbon emissions from commuters who typically drive to their destinations. In addition, the Northern Tier Rail also grants fantastic optionality for economic development. Franklin County continues to grow as a tourist destination, with the region's scenic sights and fall foliage consistently drawing people during seasonal months. The Northern Tier Rail would serve as a supportive pillar to that growth, allowing for increased foot traffic to support businesses, organizations and the work of our terrific Chamber of Commerce and Greenfield Business Association. It is natural for my focus as mayor to be on Greenfield, but I am also thrilled to think about what the Northern Tier Rail would mean for our neighboring communities. Franklin County's 26 municipalities all feature an abundance of culture and tradition. For too long, many in our state have not had the accessible means to visit these remarkable places. I truly believe the Northern Tier Rail holds the potential to uplift not just Greenfield but Franklin County and Western Massachusetts as a whole. In conclusion, I believe the Northern Tier Rail would establish an invaluable link between Eastern, Central and Western Massachusetts, a connective chain that would strengthen the connectivity of our Commonwealth. Thank you for your time and consideration.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, Mayor. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 222

Name: Michael Murphy

Date: 09/10/2024

Comment:

Hello! Local greenfield resident and business owner. I'm a representative and applicator of Global Environmental Solutions and believe that our mission aligns perfectly with Greenfield and its commitment towards a more sustainable future. Global Environmental Solutions, LLC, founded in 2001 (originally as DirtGlue Enterprises, LLC), is engaged in the science of high-technology soil stabilization. We take great pride in developing and providing green soil stabilization solutions to a host of industries for both wind and water erosion control. This technology eliminates health hazards associated with fugitive dust and noxious odors. Our corporate headquarters are located in Salem, New Hampshire. We also have several warehouse locations throughout the United States. The company has 25 sales and service locations worldwide.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment 223

Name: Chris Murphy

Date: 09/10/2024

Comment:

How about we make route 2 safe and fast before we spend a ton of \$\$ on rail to rural areas that don't really need it.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 224

Name: Claire Chang

Date: 09/10/2024

Comment:

It is imperative for climate change and global warming to upgrade the rail for electric passenger trains along the northern tier rail. There is no reason to expand fossil fuel use for transportation and then convert to electric at a later date. invest in electrical decarbonization of transportation now. all communities along the routes will be glad to have electric rail cars. as well as passengers. I would be glad to use the northern tier rail for every trip into boston that I would take. what will it take to get electric passenger rail for the northern tier? could have reduced number of stops to get route established and add stops as demand increases. would like to see Greenfield added for the 1st routing possibilities. would like 8am departure and 7pm return. adding albany could be later. what is the possible timeline for implementation?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process, and Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts.

Comment 225

Name: Charlotte Murtishaw

Date: 09/10/2024

Comment:

I know that this rail project has often been touted as a way to relieve housing pressure in Boston by creating a new channel for commuting, but the fact remains that current western MA residents are already suffering from a housing crisis which would be cruelly intensified by an influx of white collar Boston workers with commensurate salaries. I support public rail connectivity--and sorely wish local public transportation was sufficient for my day-to-day needs, having been a bus commuter before--but am extremely concerned about the impact on affordable and available housing for a region already plagued by the greed of landlords, investors, and developers. Many landlords price their units based on "the market", rather than any real financial costs, and over the past couple years, I have watched friends' rents skyrocket up 50% and force a move just because a landlord feels confident that someone will pay that amount. If TIF funding is used to incentivize developers, there should be a strict and high proportion of units scaled at affordable or median income of the local region, or otherwise coded to serve residents first rather than pushing them out. At the end of the day, I think what I am trying to communicate is that I really hope the approach here is not one which assumes the rest of the state should be a sacrifice zone for Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your concerns regarding the impact on housing. As noted in Chapter 6, there are strong connections between transportation and housing. As a result,

communities may need to collaborate on strategies and plans to balance these needs. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study, including the objective to consider mobility in Western Massachusetts. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 226**Name:** Ferd Wulkan**Date:** 09/10/2024**Comment:**

I live in Montague, near Greenfield, and would travel to Boston frequently. I only support Alternative 3 since electrification is key to our livable future. The study highlights the many benefits of this alternative. I can't support a big investment in diesel transportation

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 227**Name:** Bob Armstrong**Date:** 09/10/2024**Comment:**

I live in Conway, MA so would use this transport to get in and out of Boston. Right now mitigating climate change is our most important issue so I cannot support any project that would involve diesel engines. I strongly support Alternative 3 and none of the others.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 228**Name:** Emily Power**Date:** 09/11/2024**Comment:**

As a resident of Greenfield, I am in support of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail. Having access to our states' capital would provide immeasurable opportunities for residents along the corridor. Residents could more easily reach Boston for work, medical appointments, and leisure. Residents coming from the east could enjoy the natural beauty of our county and help to stimulate our economy by spending in our local businesses. Perhaps more

citizens will be inclined to open a business, purchase a home, or take a job in our county if it were accessible to Boston. The northern tier passenger rail can also connect students from UMass, the biggest university in the state to our states' capital. There is no doubt that a fast, reliable train to North station would be utilized to it's fullest capacity. Not to mention the environmental benefits of rail travel, travel by train is a statistically safer way to travel. Every year, 40,000 Americans are killed in car wrecks. This number can be reduced by providing alternative transportation options. Please vote to stimulate the economy of the Commonwealth by building the Northern Tier Passenger Rail!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations, increasing mobility options, and enhancing safety were objectives for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 229

Name: JC Crowley
Date: 09/11/2024
Comment:

It would be great to be able to visit my daughter and son in law who recently moved to greenfield via train. Mass has underinvested in Western MA for generations. It is an underutilized resource and reliable train service will enhance the area tremendously.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts and experience.

Comment 230

Name: Emily Koester
Date: 09/11/2024
Comment:

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to take the train from my home in Greenfield to Boston. Considering the fact that the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study lists "Minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation" as one of its goals, it would seem obvious that Alternative 3: Electrified Service is the only option that meets this criteria. I wholeheartedly support the adoption of Alternative 3.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 231**Name:** Clare Pearson**Date:** 09/11/2024**Comment:**

This is so exciting and kudos to whoever wrote this report up. . . amazing. Please choose Alternative #3, the electrified service. We all know that this is the direction we're heading, so for more up-front investment, we'll have a solution that is less disruptive or polluting along the rail lines and as we gain more "clean energy" solutions, it will become better and better. Let's not have to "undo and re-do" by starting with fossil fuel trains. I'm super excited to have this be a way to get to Boston, (or maybe even Albany). Thanks for your work on this, warmly, Clare Pearson

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts regarding alternative 3 electrified service. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience and support for connections to Albany.

Comment 232**Name:** David Greenberg**Date:** 09/12/2024**Comment:**

Thank you for completing this extensive study. I am excited that the Commonwealth is moving forward on this initiative. I strongly support Alternative 3, the electric-only option. Given what we know and have seen with regard to climate change, it makes absolutely no sense to consider any other alternative. Thank you for your consideration.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts regarding alternative 3 electrified service.

Comment 233**Name:** Carol Letson**Date:** 09/12/2024**Comment:**

Good work has been done in preparing this statement of intention. I fully support the electric train system option. I also understand that this plan is dependent on negotiations

with commercial rail requirements. May all go well on working out the details of multiple use of tracks. Only by creating the best service, with electrification, will this transportation plan be able to compete with commuters in automobiles.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts regarding alternative 3 electrified service.

Comment 234

Name: Jennifer West

Date: 09/13/2024

Comment:

The Northern Tier Passenger rail line would drastically improve the economy and lifestyle of western Massachusetts. There is no reasonable option to access eastern Massachusetts currently. It would provide access to cultural activities, broaden work opportunities, improve access to top medical care along with opening up western Massachusetts to people from the Boston area to take advantage of our sites, activities, housing, and beautiful natural setting. I am a Buckland resident and this would be an enormous benefit to our area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 235

Name: Florence Glynn

Date: 09/13/2024

Comment:

To whom this may concern, I am a resident of Montague, MA, and I want to emphasize my support for investing in the Northern Tier passenger rail link between Boston and North Adams. This investment would transform my family's ability to engage in job opportunities and to enjoy all the benefits Massachusetts has to offer. While a big cost, the human benefits do outweigh them. I ask that you consider the benefits not only for Western and Central Massachusetts residents, but also Eastern Massachusetts residents and visitors, who will have opportunities open up to explore beyond Boston in the vibrant northern western area of Massachusetts. The economy and well-being of our residents will grow

from this investment. Thank you for your consideration.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations and increasing mobility options were objectives for this study. Supporting economic mobility and promoting transportation equity were goals that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Comment 236

Name: Marie-Francoise Hatte

Date: 09/14/2024

Comment:

I fully support establishing a passenger train from North Adams to Boston, with a stop in Greenfield. I own a car and can afford to drive to Boston, but would much prefer to take the train there, even if it took the same amount of time or a bit longer. I travel from Logan airport several times per year, and taking the train (plus T or taxi) there would be incredibly more practical. I would also use the train to go to Boston for medical reasons, to visit the city's museums, patronize shops and restaurants. I currently use the Vermonter to go to Washington DC and the Valley Flyer to go to New York City. Trains are ecologically much more responsible than gas or diesel powered vehicles and I am a strong supporter of their use. Going west would also be a welcome added amenity, especially if public transportation from the North Adams train station to the local museums was an option.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations, increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts, and minimizing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 237

Name: Briggs Doxzen

Date: 09/14/2024

Comment:

As a resident of Turners Falls, MA I want to comment my support of the proposed east-west rail. Western Massachusetts has a wealth of small businesses that could be boosted by tourism the rail would bring. Turners Falls in particular, as a previous industrial mill town could see considerable benefit from visitors from the Boston area. It would be a benefit to

Bostonians as well as an accessible way to get out of the city and enjoy what our great state of Massachusetts has to offer. I would also enjoy an accessible way to get from Greenfield to North Adams without a car or go into the city by train with my kids. It would benefit everyone, city and country mice alike. Thank you for your consideration!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 238

Name: John Walter

Date: 09/14/2024

Comment:

If the train does not stop in Athol, Gardner, and Orange, what message are you sending to residents of those locales? What message are you creating about these locales for all the inner 495 citizens? You are saying that these locations don't matter, that their citizenry can and should be ignored. Creating stops in these locations is very important. Beautiful houses are going begging for buyers. These towns like Ayer can and should be revitalized! They are beautiful towns that need commuters! Climate change will create hundreds if not thousands of our own citizen refugee who will need a place to live after their homes are washed away. Would you prefer that they move to New Hampshire and Maine rather than your own state? Also, please consider a College Train to Amherst. Weekly trips to and from Eastern stations will be great for college students, reduce the need for cars and will alleviate traffic along routes 2 and 202 every Friday and Sunday. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations and increasing mobility options were objectives for this study. As part of any future project development, station stops would be evaluated. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 239

Name: Edward Schwerin

Date: 09/14/2024

Comment:

As a Western Massachusetts resident and frequent visitor to Eastern Mass for both work and recreation/family reasons, I strongly encourage our state to invest in passenger rail. The economic benefits over the long term will far outweigh the cost. Half measures are much less cost effective- people will only use rail service if it is convenient and affordable.

This requires big up front investment. Benefits on both ends of the state (and in the middle!) will have a snowball effect as more people use the services. It will relieve Eastern Mass congestion and bring much needed economic activity to the Western part of the state. Lets go all in!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 240

Name: Emily Robertson

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

To travel to Boston from Franklin County this past spring, in order to participate in a research study, I needed to use public transportation. My trip involved driving 45 min to UMass, getting on a Peter Pan Bus, which made multiple stops on it's way to Springfield, then Worcester, and finally South Station in Boston. It took over 5 hours from door to door. I made this trip multiple times. I would like to participate in more research and Northern Tier Rail would make it feasible. Also, it is becoming horribly difficult to get healthcare in Western Mass. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] For timely healthcare we HAVE to go east. It would be a literal lifesaver to know we had a reliable way to get there. I would prefer the option that stops in Shelburne Falls, but could make Greenfield work. Thank you!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study, and promoting transportation equity was a goal that guided the development of service alternatives. Station stops would be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 241

Name: Sandra Ward

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

I'm delighted to see this study and appreciate the clear writing and helpful maps. I favor Alternative 3. I approve of aiming for lower annual operating cost and higher ridership, as well-stated here: "The lowest annual cost of operations and maintenance per rider are associated with Alternative 3 and Alternative 4. These alternatives are more expensive to

design and build, but more cost effective to operate and maintain because they are estimated to have the highest ridership of the six alternatives. "

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for alternative 3. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 242

Name: Sara Seinberg

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

Passenger Rail service in a small hill town community like Leyden would make an enormous difference not just today, but for generations to come. This kind of public transportation would bring younger families to our tiny town, and ensure we can sustain ourselves in a modern economy for generations to come. Not only that, it would enable small agricultural businesses to compete and collaborate in larger markets, as well as allow aging or sick residents to travel to specialists outside of our very insular medical options. Having access to larger urban areas deliver buckets of cultural opportunities for young people from baseball games to art museums to ballet performances, as well as at the ability to visit family members throughout the Commonwealth. Life without a car for people on fixed incomes is a reality for people in my town, and I want to see their lives broaden rather than shrink. And obviously, it allows people access to higher paying job markets and creates a path to getting ahead for working families in rural places that don't want to, or cannot afford to move away from our beautiful towns.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Additional station stops would be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your sharing your experience.

Comment 243

Name: Lisa Ranghelli

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

Investment east-west passenger rail is an investment in the sustainable future of the Commonwealth, economically, environmentally and socially. This transportation

connectivity will benefit all residents and businesses on the route and end the stranglehold of fossil-fuel burning cars. The electrified version of the proposal is the most appealing. But any shorter term improvements would be helpful, such as expanding hours of Fitchburg commuter rail and making infrastructure upgrades.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Chapter 6 of the report outlines next steps, including potential short-term efforts. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 244

Name: Stephanie Wenzel

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

public transportation from eastern to western Massachusetts by rail is a great idea!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 245

Name: Glenda Spurling

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

I would like to see Shelburne Falls, Charlemont and Greenfield added to the rail line.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts on station stops.

Comment 246

Name: Leigh Rae

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

The report projections focus on analyzing (and growing) data based on existing conditions and rail service to Western Ma would very likely change the way that people travelled (ie not just north-south) and it would also very likely make living in Western Ma more appealing to many (and this would alter the ridership in ways that cannot be projected based on current conditions. In other words, having rail out here would be a game changer and very worth the capital investment, especially since MA is losing population due to the unaffordability of housing (which is more affordable in Western MA).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 247

Name: Sarah Doire

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

Passenger rail between western Mass and Boston would enable my family, among many, to access needed medical care and other services/opportunities in and around Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 248

Name: Alex Cerone

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

A rail line would change my life not only do I commute from greenfield to athol everyday a rail would help me bring my children to their specialized care at Boston hospitals with more ease.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 250

Name: Lisa Santos

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

West/East rail would be important for so many reasons.... Medical appts/tourism/education/sporting events/museums

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 251

Name: John Mrykalo

Date: 09/15/2024

Comment:

I know several families that this would have an enormous impact. Our family does not travel much, partly because of the lack of handicap parking available in Boston, but we do have to go a couple of times a month on average, and this would make it significantly less anxiety inducing and practical for when we do have medical appointments for specialists. Our younger kids, people driving and adult kids would all benefit from this!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 252

Name: Rebecca Seifried

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment:

I am writing in support of implementing passenger rail service along the northern tier corridor. For me personally - a resident of Greenfield - rail service would make it safer, easier, and more environmentally friendly to travel east, which I do regularly for medical appointments and to visit family. It would bring numerous benefits to my local community: bringing tourist dollars in, enabling local residents without cars to get to Boston more easily, and helping us all reduce our carbon footprints. I encourage the Commonwealth to move forward with this investment, and to choose a plan that provides the most access to the most number of residents. In my view, a blend of Alternative 4 (full local service) and Alternative 5 (Albany extension) that added more stations would make it a more useful

public transportation option.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for sharing your thoughts on a combination of Alternatives 4 and 5. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 253

Name: Ronan Murphy

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment:

Please improve rail service from Boston to the Berkshires!!! I would have such a huge positive impact on my life. I often need to fly for business for long trips where driving to Boston is not realistic, and having a easy way to get to Boston and back would be amazing. With good and easy train services, we would even go into Boston on a regular basis just to enjoy all Massachusetts has to offer on our days off.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations was an objective of this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 254

Name: Minna Roussi

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment:

Please move forward with this project! It would provide transportation support for families whose children have medical care in Boston. It would also make Boston an accessible visit for my son, who would be able to connect with all of the city's resources.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 255

Name: Julie Ryan
Date: 09/16/2024
Comment:

Yes please include a stop in North Adams.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts on station stops.

Comment 256

Name: Pam Henderson
Date: 09/16/2024
Comment:

Easier access to Boston would help with medical care for my disabled child

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 257

Name: Holly Johnson
Date: 09/16/2024
Comment:

Getting into Boston is so hard and it is necessary for so many people in Western MA. Specialized medical care is not available here. a passenger rail to Boston would make getting care so much easier for families.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study and promoting transportation equity was a goal that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experience.

Comment 258

Name: Virginia Grant

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment: I really want this to happen I would use the train every weekend and during the week

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 259

Name: Benjamin Pancy

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment:

Having reviewed the options, I feel that extending the line all the way to Albany is the correct choice for this project moving forward. The Northern Tier Rail is hoping to address the needs of an underserved portion of the state, and connecting to Albany would not only make the line more functional but also provide more ridership in the reverse direction. Based on the scheduling the way it is proposed in the draft report, the trains would generally be bringing riders from the West and Central regions into Boston, leaving many return trains much more empty, as there is less demand for trips from East and Central Massachusetts to the west, aside from weekends. Adding a connection to Albany would fix this problem. At the moment, there is no good way to access the Amtrak network from a place such as Gardner. The only options are to drive to Worcester to take the Lake Shore Limited from there or drive to Springfield and take the Valley Flyer. Either option requires a lengthy car ride to trains that run infrequently. Albany is a better hub than Boston on the Amtrak network, and connects with more trains to more locations, and is a more efficient trip, preventing the need to backtrack to Boston to get on a Westbound train. This would also alleviate some traffic at South Station. I consider the Northern Tier rail project a generational opportunity to serve these underserved constituents, and I feel that it would be penny-wise and pound-foolish to implement a system that does not do everything it can to connect this part of Massachusetts not just to the state, but the country as well.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 260

Name: Heather Abbott Gray

Date: 09/16/2024

Comment:

I would love it if we had a train stop in Greenfield and/or Shelburne Falls! That would be a huge help, thanks!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts on station stops.

Comment 261

Name: Zach Fried
Date: 09/17/2024
Comment:

As a resident of Amherst MA, I wholeheartedly support this project and look forward to utilizing it as a convenient and greener way to visit Boston. For it to work, the schedule must be frequent enough that people can plan to use it, not plan their day around it.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience and thoughts.

Comment 262

Name: Ayden Grout
Date: 09/17/2024
Comment:

This would be a life altering commuting option for me as someone who drives two hours each way to teach at Boston University. To be able to take a train would be good for the environment, my wallet, traffic on Route 2, and parking in Boston. Plus I could work on the way!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations and increasing mobility options were objectives for this study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 263

Name: Dorothy Mclver
Date: 09/18/2024
Comment:

It is very important to me to have have a Northern Tier train option that would allow us direct access Boston. I cannot get from Greenfield to Boston except by a bus that gets to

Boston in the middle of the night (as of a couple of years ago). And besides spending time in Boston, I also want to be able to take the train from Boston to my hometown in Maine, But since the bus arrived in Boston in the middle o the night, if did not feel like a safe situation to be in until the train left later the next morning for Maine. Hopefully trains to Boston would make connecting to trains going to other destinations more feasible. Perhaps you could repsond to my concerns about this. I can no longer drive to Boston and am elderly so need safe options of travel,

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 264

Name: Judd Greenstein

Date: 09/18/2024

Comment:

This rail extension is the ultimate “if you build it they will come” plan. You cannot evaluate it based on existing population and trends. Housing will respond to this line. I cannot emphasize how much more attractive it will make a community like greenfield. Many people work partly from home and partly at an office. They could do that in Boston from greenfield! It is imperative that you make these rail lines electrified. This is an investment in the future - that is where energy is going, and it will cost more to redo the work in the future. Make it happen! This will change lives and communities!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations, and supporting the advancement of economic development policies were objectives of this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and support for expanded rail service.

Comment 265

Name: Travis Drury

Date: 09/18/2024

Comment:

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study severely underestimates the impact this would have on central and western Mass towns. The ability to travel across the entire state by train through the northern part of the state would have huge impacts. I live in Greenfield and it would mean that Greenfield would have both North-South passenger rail and East-West passenger rail options. Greenfield would literally be a hub for passenger rail travel and this

would help my community immensely. Western Mass is also facing the issue of an aging, stagnant population and more travel routes, especially to Boston, would make our area so much more attractive to younger people who could help revitalize the entire region in Western Mass. Please support a northern tier passenger rail service! Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 266

Name: Laurie Goddard

Date: 09/18/2024

Comment:

We need this! I am a business and home owner in Shelburne Falls. We would LOVE this to happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 267

Name: Stacy Bond

Date: 09/19/2024

Comment:

I grew up in the Eastern part of the state but love living out here in Northfield MA, where a train that brings passengers both from Boston out west and out west to Boston along the Rte 2 corridor would be a GAME CHANGER for so many things! One lesser known reason is for services with kids with disabilities. There are few options in western mass and a train to Boston would make accessing those better services easier for families. It would also enable better tourism to the Pioneer Valley, and allow better access for people to work in the city, but live out in the country. This is one of the best ideas I have heard in a long time!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 268

Name: Marsh Hudson-Knapp

Date: 09/19/2024

Comment:

In the face of climate change and the challenge to reduce carbon emissions from cars I strongly advocate for Alternative #5 so the plan will attract a large number of passengers in Massachusetts, Vermont and New York with a great connection with Albany, New York City and Boston and everywhere along the way. Stopping in North Adams will fail half of the market of travelers.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation was a goal of the study and guided the development of the service alternatives.

Comment 270

Name: Raymond DiDonato

Date: 09/19/2024

Comment:

I am a fan of rail service, but I am concerned about how the northern tier rail might impact communities from a housing density perspective. MBTA and MBTA adjacent communities are required by law to adopt density zoning, and the Attorney General has been aggressive is suing municipalities that do not comply. This worries me. Our small rural communities along the rail do not have the capacity or infrastructure to support density zoning. So I am in favor of the rail if the MBTA does not operate it, thus exempting our communities from the MBTA Communities Law, or if the Legislature repeals the law. However, if bringing Northern Tier rail means making our communities MBTA or MBTA adjacent communities, I would be vigorously opposed.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Given the intercity nature of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, please note that Amtrak provides most U.S. intercity service.

Comment 271

Name: Wilson Roberts

Date: 09/20/2024

Comment:

Living in western Massachusetts is lovely. I fear that climate change alone is going to result in a lot of people moving to our open land and littering it with houses and developments. If we allow the railroad to come it will lead to further deterioration of our rural Massachusetts landscape and lifestyle. What a nightmare. If people want proximity to Boston, the Cape, New York and other such destinations they should move closer to them, not bring their crowded towns and suburbs out here. No more railways!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 272

Name: Bob Norcross

Date: 09/20/2024

Comment:

It is vital to the Northern Berkshires that we get connected to be able to have accessible passenger rail to Albany, Springfield, Boston, and New York. It seem that we have always been out of the loop for fast and reasonable transportation to the major cities in the northeast.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improved connectivity and access to destinations, and increased mobility options were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 273

Name: Megan Randall

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

I would like to see alternative #5 implemented, with a train station in Pownal, VT and service through to Albany and NYC. This would serve 3 states: VT, NY and MA, bringing in more passengers and allowing them to travel to Boston or NYC.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 274**Name:** Marcus Graly**Date:** 09/21/2024**Comment:**

I want to express my support for this project. I would ride the train regularly and a number of the people I know, both in Eastern and Western Mass would too. I hope we go with the fully electric option. I know it's more expensive upfront, but it would be worthwhile in the long run. The commuter rail should be electrified too, so this could be an opportunity to upgrade the whole Fitchburg line.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement and thoughts about electrification.

Comment 275**Name:** Elizabeth Hammond**Date:** 09/21/2024**Comment:**

please build this rail line. it would allow me to visit my friends who have moved out to western ma without having to take a bus.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 276**Name:** Ariel Weinberg**Date:** 09/21/2024**Comment:**

Please prioritize this incredibly important piece of infrastructure to support our state economy and environment

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of

service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 278

Name: Amy Liljestrand

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

Please build this line.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 279

Name: Diane Kelly

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

As a resident of Franklin County, I think that restarting rail service between Boston and North Adams is a marvelous idea.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 280

Name: Daniel Raine

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

Please go through with building the Northern Tier Rail! I have been following this project for years, and think it will be an incredible way to connect our state. I used to commute regularly from Greenfield to Boston, and this would make it a lot more practical. It would also allow people living in Boston without cars to travel and see more of the state, and bring some life to a lot of the small towns in Western Mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 281

Name: Maya Karpovich-Larson

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

Having a train from Western Mass to Eastern Mass would greatly improve my life and many others. I live in Western Mass with no car and it would allow me to get to my medical appointments in Boston. It would also reduce pollution from car traffic in the state, especially for daily commuters. I think many people would prefer taking the train to driving across the state, when you factor in gas costs, traffic, and the stress of driving. Please do everything you can to make this passenger rail a reality.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 282

Name: Bill Card

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

I'd like to see passenger rail along the northern tier. That area has some of the most affordable real estate in Massachusetts, and if people could easily get from there to the employment centers in Eastern MA, such a service would support economic development and more housing without much of an increase in car traffic.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you sharing your experience and thoughts.

Comment 283

Name: Sally Eldred

Date: 09/21/2024

Comment:

Originally from great Barrington ,I live primarily 20 miles west of Boston and travel to the Berkshire's on a regular basis. The northern tier passenger rail would be a service to me and I would use it frequently, especially if I could bring my cat on board.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 284

Name: Colette Parry

Date: 09/22/2024

Comment:

I am a Greater Boston resident who would use a passenger rail service to visit Greenfield, MA for cultural events. I (and others in my community) would use such a service several times a year. It would be especially impactful for those like me in the folk music and dance community who don't own a car (and as many of our community members are elderly, those who are not able to drive long distances or late at night).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 286

Name: Kristen Planeaux

Date: 09/22/2024

Comment:

I am in favor of the completion of the northern tier. I travel to Boston frequently and it would be life changing to be able to take public transit from my home in Montague. Multiple daily trains would be incredibly useful.

Please build this! I will use it to commute to Boston. Multiple daily trains would be incredible.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience. Chapter 6 of the report outlines next steps, which may evaluate schedules as part of any future project development. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 287

Name: Calyx Terrafen

Date: 09/23/2024

Comment:

Having a regular rail service has been something myself and most of the other people in this area that I know have been excitedly awaiting. I've lived in this area for the vast majority of my life, and I'm frequently cut off from friends and family because of lack of access to transit. This is an important service to connect people to the economy, and the economy to people.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 288

Name: Emily Piper

Date: 09/23/2024

Comment:

I support the building of the norther tier corridor to western mass. We need more accessible transport across the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 289

Name: Michael Blaguszewski

Date: 09/23/2024

Comment:

As someone living on the Orange Line, with aging parents in Greenfield, having a rail connection to North Station would make it more convenient for me and my family to visit each other. I'm glad the DOT is looking into it.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 290

Name: AJ Irizarry

Date: 09/23/2024

Comment:

Add an extension to Albany to connect more folks from southern VT, NYC, NY Capital Region, and beyond.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 291

Name: Laura Bentz

Date: 09/24/2024

Comment:

In this era of changing climate, train service between Berkshire county and Eastern counties, and Boston, will provide innumerable benefits. In addition to lowering carbon released by individual cars, viable train service will reduce accidents! Please bring back train service, asap.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 292

Name: Amita Khurana

Date: 09/24/2024

Topics:

Comment:

As a student at Williams, this seems like a great idea!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 293

Name: Alexis Hosea-Abbott

Date: 09/24/2024

Comment:

I'm very excited for this and any regional rail expansions in the state. Inter-urban trains seems to be missing in our public transit network. Driving is no longer fun, adventurous source of freedom it was when the highways were built or even when the scene-byways were established. Driving is expensive, dangerous, anti-social, time-consuming and stressful. This will also address housing needs for moving the population West into the Berkshires (as of 2020 was the only part of the state losing residents), which I know housing goals are a major objective of this administration.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts and improving connectivity were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts about expanded rail service.

Comment 294

Name: Bernard Brouillet
Date: 09/25/2024
Comment:

Please end this project immediately! Completely impractical to expand passenger rail service west of Fitchburg in the present day. Extreme curves, greater track distance than simply going down Route 2. It is a massive waste of money to even continue discussing this fantasy. There is no way it would be financially feasible even if the passenger fares were over \$1000 per trip! This is simply a misguided project idea for a few people who do not understand reality! Just improve Route 2, and even more importantly, take actions to bring the jobs west of Fitchburg instead of trying to bring a few people closer to Boston using other people's money!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comments. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 295

Name: Crispin Youngberg
Date: 09/25/2024
Comment:

I live in Greenfield and am very excited to have more train service, most important thing for me is frequent service

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 296**Name:** Deborah Yaffee**Date:** 09/25/2024**Comment:**

Please do not stop in Shelburne Falls....most locals are elderly and can barely pay their real estate taxes now....this will only increase them for buckland residents, as the stop will be on the buckland side most likely. Also, we have enough trouble with the increase in tourists as it is. Increased trains coming through town in a residential neighborhood would not be welcome either. It also means increased train blasts in the local neighborhood. Please no.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Station stops would be further evaluated as part of any future project development. Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Comment 297**Name:** Corinne Greenblatt**Date:** 09/25/2024**Comment:**

I strongly encourage the implementation of the Northern Tier Rail project with the high investment option. This project is past due as it is absurd that it is so much easier to get from Berkshire County to NYC than it is to get to Boston. I am a resident of New York City without a car and spend time in Berkshire County for work. The only reason I'm able to do this is because of the existing transit options. Individuals in northern Berkshire County and others along the northern tier deserve these options and access to transit that allows them more comprehensive access to the state in which they live.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you voicing your support for the high investment alternative. Thank you for sharing your experience.

Comment 298**Name:** Becca Hill**Date:** 09/26/2024**Comment:**

I live in Greenfield and would love to have a more accessible way of getting to Boston! It would make it so much easier to get to the city when I need to travel for work. I would even be in favor of a tax hike to make it happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 299

Name: William Elfast

Date: 09/26/2024

Comment:

Long term public service infrastructure projects bring value above a financial reward. The fact that this study concludes that it 'may' not fully reimburse the cost means that it is close enough to warrant execution. Disappointing to see that the conclusion recommends further studies, a leader needs to be able to see the good above cost and push it through.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts.

Comment 300

Name: Rebecca Bialecki

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Critical to the North Quabbin economy is a rail stop in Athol

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for economic development in this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Alternatives 3 and 4 included a potential station stop in Athol, which may be evaluated as a part of any future project development.

Comment 301

Name: Mireille Bejjani

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Having passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor will be game-changing for countless Massachusetts residents. As a resident of Western Massachusetts who goes to Boston regularly for work, I wish there were alternatives to driving 2 hours each way, causing greenhouse gas emissions, taking time out of my day due to traffic, and costing me more because of parking in Boston. West-east rail will open up the state to communities being more connected and residents being able to more easily and affordably get where they need to go.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 302

Name: Eric Calkoun
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

Please ensure that Northern Tier Rail is built as fast as possible! Residents of Greenfield/Western MA have lost equitable transportation to important economic hubs in eastern MA, we must reconnect via rail. The best time to start would've been years ago, please move faster!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of alternatives. Chapter 6 of the report outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 303

Name: Lori Shine
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass. And it will greatly ease road traffic!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 304**Name:** Marnie Genre**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

I support western mass rail and my family would make regular use of it getting to and from Boston and throughout western mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 305**Name:** Matthew Gasper**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

I would use this passenger train on a weekly basis for commuting to for certain work tasks, seeing family member and friends. Unfortunately I have to drive often for these reasons and roads like rt 2 seem more and more unable to keep up and offer safe and on time passage to make these commitments I have . Please consider making this train a reality. I am not alone , so many people I know not only in the area i live in in western MA, but also in the athol area would use this . Thanks you

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 306**Name:** Andra Rose**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

I support rail along the Rt 2 corridor for Western Mass. It would make a huge difference in mobility options that don't require cars.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options was an objective for this study. We appreciate your support for expanded rail service.

Comment 307**Name:** Meryl Mandell**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

We are discouraged from visiting Boston because of the heavy traffic along Route 2. A rail stop in Orange or Athol would be greatly appreciated and used. Please consider upgrading the Northern Tier rail service and adding a stop at one of these locations. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Additional station stops may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Comment 308**Name:** Lianna Hart**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

I grew up in Hampshire county and have always felt that we must rely too heavily on cars to get around. Western Massachusetts functions as a region; residents need to move between towns easily in order to meet their basic needs and have a good quality of life. Currently the public transit system is just not robust enough. I teach ESOL to adult immigrants and refugees in Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden counties. A huge barrier to their ability to successfully secure and hold onto jobs is the ability to have reliable transportation. Having a train line that could quickly bring them to different parts of the region would open up many opportunities for them, benefitting both our local economies and their successful integration into our communities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided development of service alternatives. We appreciate you sharing your experience and your engagement.

Comment 309**Name:** L Whittier**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 310

Name: Tom Davies

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

we are very much excited for the new passenger service along the Norther Tier Corridor!!!! please please please do whatever is needed to make this a reality and ASAP!! thanks. i know many people that would use this regularly, and it will bring more business to the corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 311

Name: Taryn Laraja

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Please make a railway from Western mass to Boston. It would make so much sense! People can leave their cars behind, enjoy a relaxing trip across our state and not cause congestion in Boston since we have a beautiful small city that we can walk around!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 312

Name: William Leight

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am strongly in favor of further rail links in western Massachusetts, and I sincerely hope that this project goes through.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts regarding expanded rail service.

Comment 313

Name: Ellen H Anderson

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I'm very supportive of Northern Tier Passenger Rail. I am a lifelong user of commuter rail and the new Wachusett Station is wonderful. I am so hopeful that Northern Tier can go forward.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your comment about existing service and support for expanded rail service. Thank you for your engagement.

Comment 314

Name: Madeline Landauer

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am in favor of rail lines and connections linking Western MA to Boston. In fact as a frequent user of public transportation -- I do not own a car for environmental/climate reasons -- I would urge all viable useful railway expansion.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience and support for expanded rail service.

Comment 315

Name: Josianna Martini

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

This is such a needed service. My family needs to travel to Boston multiple times a month and having a commuter rail would make our lives much easier. It would also open up job opportunities for many folks that wouldn't be available otherwise.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience. Given the intercity nature of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, please note that any potential expanded passenger rail service may be operated by Amtrak, which provides most intercity service in the U.S. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 316

Name: Craig Kannel

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western mass deserves good rail service just like Eastern. I'm all for route 2 rail service. All electric if possible

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts on expanded rail service and electrification.

Comment 317

Name: David Ruderman

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I support a passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 318

Name: Penelope Corcoran

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Some people in Franklin County are concerned about the rail's impact on housing. We're already short on housing. Will the availability of train service bring a wave of commuters to the area who can outbid locals for housing stock?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your concerns regarding the impact on housing. As you note, and as noted in Chapter 6, there are strong connections between transportation and housing. As a result, communities may need to develop strategies and plans to balance these needs.

Comment 319

Name: Peggy Stubbs

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Please connect Western MA by rail to points west/south to NY city and points east to Boston etc. long overdue.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate your support for potential expanded rail service.

Comment 320

Name: Suzy Campos

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

One of the main reasons our western Mass family rarely visits Boston is because finding, and paying for, parking in the city is a huge hassle and expense. We would go much more often if there was an efficient and affordable train. Conversely, since many Boston-area residents don't own cars, a convenient train would allow them to more easily travel to western Mass. The economy across the commonwealth would benefit from connecting all parts of the state together.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 321

Name: Alex Jarrett

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Train service along the Route 2 corridor would help us meet our climate goals, spur economic development, and provide important public transit access.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 322

Name: Sharon Hart

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 323

Name: Amanda Barbour

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Passenger rail across the state would be fantastic! Travel between boston and greenfield by public transportation is currently really annoying and this looks like it would serve a lot of people really well.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking time to share your thoughts.

Comment 324

Name: Susan Worgaftik

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Northern Tier rail service is essential to the development of the western part of Massachusetts. Please support the development of this service. This service will enhance and speed up economic development in the region and cut back the use of fossil fuels by

providing an alternative to automobile travel to the Boston area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 325

Name: Michael Foldy

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western Mass desperately needs a Northern tier rail connection to the Boston area so people have a transportation option besides cars. It would save a lot of gas, ease pollution and the demands on Rt. 2 infrastructure, promote economic growth and tourism both ways

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 326

Name: Jan Whitaker

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am very much in favor of moving ahead with the Northern Tier Passenger Rail from North Adams to Boston. I say this as a resident of Western Massachusetts and as a believer in reducing emissions. Right now the option is to drive on the Pike -- which has become a much busier roadway, with more unchecked speeding and a larger number of trucks. I would love to be able to leave my car at home much more of the time, but even if I drive to a rail stop on the Northern Tier I will be using far less gas than I would driving to Boston. Please keep in mind, also, that the need to drive to Boston has increased with hospital consolidations in Western Mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 327

Name: Kevin Collins

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western Massachusetts is about to get hydro power from Canada (in case you noticed all the new infrastructure) and, with cheap (renewable) energy will become a viable place for industry again (home of the first Industrial Revolution). Now is the time to rebuild the rail infrastructure to the river of talent flowing again. Northern Tier is a go.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 328

Name: Hillary Gardner

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 329

Name: Henry Rosenberg

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Improving gas mileage, even moving to electric cars, is not enough to prevent climate catastrophe. What we need is public transportation. East-West passenger rail service is a vital part of what Mass. needs.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 330

Name: Linda Downs-Bembury

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Our daughter was ill in Eastern MA and hospitalized for approximately 1 month. I drive to the Fitchburg train station every day to take the train in. It would have been much more convenient if the train had come further west for both my comings and goings. The train USED to go from Erving to Boston. I wish it still did!!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 332

Name: Stephen Coswell

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I have moved to W. Springfield Ma. It's needed

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment 333

Name: Donna McMallum

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Having a robust rail network in Western MA would be a major improvement to our somewhat lacking public transportation system.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 334

Name: Sara A Elkins

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

People who live in Western MA. should have access to train transportation to Boston. There are many people who would be interested in the higher paid positions in Boston if they were not required to drive both ways and pay for the huge parking fees. There is even a greater group of people here who would like to take a train to spend the day checking out Boston's

fine museums and cultural offerings in addition to shopping and dining options.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 336

Name: Perry Carter

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

The western part of our state deserves a functional and efficient rail network like eastern Mass. I hope the state will approach the project with sensitivity to the ecosystems impacted by the deforestation and construction process.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Environmental impacts would be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 337

Name: Kevin Lake

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Several years ago, we moved from Northampton to Albany for a few years for my work. While there, we frequently went into New York City by hopping a train in Albany and getting out in Penn Station and then walking or taking a cab. It would never occur to us to drive there. Back now in Northampton and with Boston as our "Big City", we frequently go into Boston to visit our public school teacher son or go to a museum or to Fenway, and we ONLY take the car....there is no good alternative. Rail service would be not only good environmentally, it would be an easy and preferable way to travel!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 338

Name: Jill Vescovi

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western MA deserves public transportation too. Franklin and Hampshire counties have a serious lack of transportation options, and it can be very challenging for those without their own vehicle to travel anywhere. In an area where everything is so spread out and every single thing is a drive, this is much needed.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations was an objective for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 339

Name: Elizabeth Diamond

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am for passenger rail to serve as a link between northwestern MA and Boston

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 340

Name: Raymond Bradley

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Rail service across northern Massachusetts will create a fundamental economic boost to the region. The initial costs will be offset in the long-term by this development

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 341

Name: Erica Lorentz

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

We need more clean public transportation from east to west like electric fast speed trains. There is nothing like that now.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 342

Name: Virginia Partridge

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I work at UMass Amherst and having train service across the state would be game changing for students looking for jobs and internships, so they can more easily get to points east. It would make a meaningful difference in helping them have reliable transportation to job interviews and during daily commutes, since many students do not have their own vehicles.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 343

Name: Dennis Morin

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am opposed to the Northern Tier Rail. It only invites development and destruction of the rural landscape that makes this part of Western Ma so rural and desirable. Try instead to enhance and expand on the rural farming and forestry related business that normally are found here. Inundating the rural areas of our state with urban ideology only destroys our rural way of life.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 344

Name: Lexi Turner

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I moved from outside Boston to Greenfield a year ago, and now here in western Massachusetts it is eye opening that rail access is so limited. Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 345

Name: Emily Weir
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

All of Massachusetts deserves good reliable rail service, not just the Boston area. Please support trains along the Rt 2 corridor from Western Mass to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 346

Name: Lori Divine-Hudson
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

An East- West Rail would be a game changer in so many areas. Work, housing, education, medical care and easy access to Logan Airport from Western MA.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity to destinations and increasing mobility options were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 347

Name: Susan King
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

Western Mass deserves a passenger rail to help with commuting struggles

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity and reliability were objectives for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 348

Name: William Sweeney

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I think east-west rail is a vital part of Massachusetts infrastructure. As we move to the future rail can play a pivotal role in stabilizing and vitalizing local economies. Please insure an energy smart future by including rail, and public transportation in general, in all infrastructure developments going forward.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 349

Name: Susan Triolo

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail service from North Adams to Boston, PLEASE. There are many occasions when i would go to Boston if there was easy access, instead of 2 hours of driving each way, and exhorbitant parking fees. Then using the MTA to get where i want to go. In fact, i would attend many events of civic interest, that so often occur in Boston, and therefore not accessible for me.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity and reliability were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 350

Name: Lise Sanders

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

PLEASE provide passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor! Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like that of eastern Mass -- for the economy, culture, and the climate!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 351

Name: John Cevasco
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

I want passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 352

Name: Ginetta Candelario
Date: 09/27/2024
Comment:

Please make this happen! We need an environmentally friendly and inexpensive way to get from Western Mass to Boston. The lack of a rail line that runs west to east is an embarrassment for a state as wealthy and progressive on environmental matters as ours. It's time to break the Peter Picknelly stranglehold on alternatives to Peter Pan Buses. Not only would this help the environment/air quality/etc. by reducing the number of cars on the road, it would help the economies of all the towns along the way as it would facilitate an increase in travel and commerce. It is also a disability rights issue, for folks who have physical incapacities such as wheelchair use or eyesight limitations that make driving difficult or impossible, a train service facilitates their access to travel across the state. I, for one, would get to Boston far more often to see shows, visit museums, etc. if I didn't have to drive in the weather/at night, deal with traffic, and pay for parking.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 353**Name:** Greg ODonnell**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

Please add northern tier rail to our transportation options. Western MA deserves rail options: commuter, town to town or to the eastern part of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity were objectives for this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 354**Name:** Eli Smith**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service would be an immense positive change for all the regions it passes through especially in western Massachusetts. Specifically the electrified high investment option. It is time for Massachusetts to invest in its citizens whether or not it is profitable. Public transit is a mode of transport that has never and is never meant to make profits. It is a public service that would generate great economic benefits in our communities while protecting our environment. It's time our state government spends equitable amounts of money on infrastructure in central and western Mass as they do in eastern Mass. I would also like to say that fast, on time, and frequent service is also incredibly important for people to actually switch to this mode of transportation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts on electrification and the environment. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 355**Name:** Lael Birch**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

I want passenger rail along the rt 2 corridor. I used to commute into Boston once a week for work, and it was really annoying to have to drive all the way to Wachusett to get on a train.

Passenger rail will open up more opportunities for people to move to Western MA, and is needed for people out here who need easier transportation to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 356

Name: Gabriel Fontes

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment: We *need* and deserve a rail to western massachusetts. My father is in Shutesbury and my mother is in Amherst and it makes working in Boston impossible.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts was an objective for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 357

Name: Leah Velleman

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Passenger rail on route 2 would be life-changing! I live in a hill town that's pretty isolated. More people than you'd think don't have cars, and depend on neighbors for rides. Getting a ride to a train stop in Orange or even Greenfield would be far easier than getting a ride to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 358

Name: Sam Birch

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

STRONG SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN TIER PASSENGER RAIL I live in Wendell, on the route 2 corridor, and I think passenger rail along this route would be extremely beneficial to my area. It's currently very difficult for those who can't drive long distances to get anywhere from my area. This includes the many elderly folks in my town as well as disabled people like my spouse. Passenger service between Wachusett and Greenfield would be a godsend here. And it would help push us along on the path to decarbonizing and eliminating unnecessary private automobile trips. ALSO I'm currently looking for employment, and so many tech jobs want at least a day or two in the office. Being able to get a train in Greenfield or Gardner instead of having to drive to Wachusett would open up so much more opportunities to me.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access to destinations and minimizing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 359

Name: Nora Maynard

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

This would be so good for the environment, for western MA businesses, and would increase my quality of life significantly. Please do this!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 360

Name: Christian Day

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I travel all along the route 2 corridor on a regular basis and would absolutely love to have the option to take a train instead of driving. Being able to bring a bicycle (or a group of 10 friends all with bicycles, even better!) along would be absolutely amazing. I'm so happy to see this potentially becoming a reality.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 361**Name:** William Spitzer**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

It would be so helpful to have a better rail connection between Western Mass and Boston, this would make it so much easier to visit the Boston area and for friends and families to visit us in the Pioneer Valley. Western Mass deserves to have a stronger rail system as Eastern Mass does, and the Route 2 corridor would make sense for this.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 362**Name:** Hollington Lee**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

As a resident of Hatfield in western MA, my wife and I often bemoan the fact that we don't have many East/West rail options. Our son lives in Boston and we would love to be able to take a train in to visit for the day. Not to mention all the cultural activities that we might enjoy. We have been driving but as we age, we are looking for alternatives to ease our travel. A passenger rail option to Boston along the Route 2 corridor would be a wonderful solution for many.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity and reliability were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 363**Name:** Clarissa Eck**Date:** 09/27/2024**Comment:**

Yes, I think this is an excellent idea for the development of Western Mass and that having a convenient rail through Greenfield through to North Adams would bring in more business to Franklin County and make it easier to access the urban center of Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 364

Name: Anna Heard

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Passenger rail along the route 2 corridor would be a game changer for western MA. The very congested routes along both the Mass Pike and Route 2 could be alleviated by high quality rail service, which could improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. Connecting the rail service to the MTA is also essential, preferably on the western edge but perhaps also more centrally (e.g. government center).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. All alternatives would service North Station with MBTA services and Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 would also serve Porter Square station. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 365

Name: Kent Johnson

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Yes, I support passenger rail along the Rt 2 corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 366

Name: Kate Merna

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

As someone living in Boston without a car, having a rail corridor along Rt 2 would open up the state for me!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 367

Name: Steve Grandpre

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Passenger rail would be extremely helpful for connecting my communities in Western MA!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 368

Name: Carolyn Emberley

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

PLEASE give us a passenger rail on the RT 2 corridor!!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 369

Name: John Ostwald

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want a passenger rail on route 2, please!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 370

Name: Jaguar Kristeller

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I really want passenger rail on route 2!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 371

Name: Jaclyn Horowitz

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want a route 2 rail cooridor

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 372

Name: Elizabeth Brownell

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I would like to have passenger rail service provided along the Rt 2 corridor!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 373

Name: Nick Peloquin

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail on Rt 2 please

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 374

Name: Polina Ermoshkina

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I would like a passenger rail along route 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 375

Name: Joanne Mcgee

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Very important to establish this rail link along the northern tier. The long drive to boston is worse now with so much traffic. It's a thre hour drive instead of two hours with big backups.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 376

Name: Sarah Freedberg

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I support passenger rail for Western Mass. I have family in the east and would like to take the train to visit them as a two hour drive is getting to be too much for me.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 377

Name: Christopher Woodall

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I would use and thinks passenger rail along rt 2 would be very useful and heavily it utilized

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 378

Name: Elliot Jackson

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I want rail transit along rte 2!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 379

Name: Sara Tyler

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

Western MA deserves a robust rail system like the eastern part of the state. It would make a huge difference to us. Please add the rail service!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 380

Name: Maryann Auriemma

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I would love to see Northern Tier Passenger Rail. As a senior, it would help me to get to Boston for medical appointments rather than drive. I would also be able to take in a show or museum. Right now, it is 90 miles for me to drive to Boston and can take up to 2.5 hours of driving depending on traffic.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 381

Name: Stefan Colton

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I commute from Somerville to Devens; Alewife traffic is bad, so would benefit from passenger rail with greater frequency and distribution of stops. I appreciate the proposed route goes deeper into Somerville, if anything should be extended further.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Station stops may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 382

Name: Jordan Abbott

Date: 09/27/2024

Comment:

I am strongly in favor of passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 383

Name: Clare Deucher

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

As a citizen living in North Central Massachusetts, I attended a few of the NT zoom presentations. Those of us who live here have an embarrassing lack of public transportation available to us. This NT rail service is essential to residents who want to travel outside of their small rural towns. There are no other options available to us. It is past time when the public transportation needs of taxpayers who live outside of Route 128 are finally addressed.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and improving connectivity and reliability were objectives for this study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 384

Name: Afsana Afzal

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I want a rail line along route 2 asap pls

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 385

Name: Mary King

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I would like to be able to take a train from Greenfield or Athol to Fitchburg and Boston. A schedule appropriate for commuting to jobs would be wonderful.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 386

Name: Emily Samuels

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Rail alternatives along the Northern Tier would be wonderful.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 387

Name: Heather McLaughlin

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

If a safe and fast travel to Boston could happen, I'd drive from Northampton to catch the train.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 388

Name: James Pouliot

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Please please please do a route 2 rail corridor!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 389

Name: Sally Goldin

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Rail travel is safe, convenient and environmentally sustainable. Please expand the rail network in Massachusetts to better serve communities in the western part of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal for this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 390

Name: Jessica Howard

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I want a passenger rail! that would be amazing!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 391

Name: Cynthia Ellis

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Western Mass to Boston reliable rail would be great for both regions! It could greatly help eliminate the horrific traffic congestion of cars entering/leaving the Boston area! It would help cut down on the numerous traffic accidents/deaths as well.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options and enhancing safety were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your comment.

Comment 392

Name: Dan Miller

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I want a passenger rail on route 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 393

Name: Paul Secker

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

A rail connection between Western Massachusetts and Eastern Massachusetts would massively improve transportation and travel across the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, including increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts, was a goal for this study that

guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 394

Name: Judith Nietsche

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I am a senior living in Greenfield and used to drive to Fitchburg to catch the train into Boston for shopping, attending concerts and theater, etc. I no longer feel able and safe to drive on Rt. 2. Having the Northern Tier Passenger Service will be a total game changer to my quality of life, and ability to access healthcare needs from Boston area medical facilities should these be needed.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, including increased mobility options and safety, was a goal for this study that guided alternatives development. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 395

Name: Cynthia Allen

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I frequently use Route 2 to get from Whately to Boston. As I've gotten older I wish there was a second option. The commuting traffic near Boston can often be bananas, the sunrise/sunset glare is challenging to navigate safely, and as an older person it is difficult to drive at night. A train option would be fantastic. I frequently use the train to go down to New Haven, CT or NYC, and would happily utilize a service along the northern Massachusetts corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 396

Name: Brant Cheikes

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Reasonably priced passenger rail service between Western MA and the Boston/Cambridge area would be an economic blessing. We would use it to more easily take advantage of the many educational and cultural opportunities in Boston. Today it's a long hard drive with crazy traffic. Rail would be wonderful! We'd love to see this implemented before we're dead!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 397

Name: Jeffrey Meckling

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I urge the state to make every effort to develop passenger rail in one form or another along the Rt. 2 corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 398

Name: Halley Scott

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail on rt 2!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 399

Name: G. Richard Dundas

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I favor alternative 5 as it would give better access to Albany from southern VT, northern Berkshires, and eastern New York.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and your support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 400

Name: David Marlin

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

We need rail service in Western MA! Please make this happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 401

Name: Laura Keeler

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

I desperately want passenger rail service along the Rte 2 corridor/Greenfield to Boston ASAP!! I live in SE Vermont but go to the Boston area frequently and would VASTLY prefer to take a train along the lines of the MBTA commuter rail than have to drive.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 402

Name: Peter Blood=Patterson

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

Rail service from the NW section of the state to Worcester and Boston is a critical infrastructure piece for our state. It will help us move away from fossil fuels. I will spur development. It will be a significant improvement to the quality of life in our state. I hope service will be such that people can go to Boston from our region in a day and return with early morning trains inbound and evening outbound. Although I will not myself do a daily commute I think this is very important. I very much hope it can be an electrified service. At

this time I have to drive whenever I want to go to a musical event, political or religious event, or recreation such as a ball game or museum visit. I also have many friends in Boston. I would far prefer to take the train!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Service characteristics, including electrification, would be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experience.

Comment 403

Name: Gretchen Laise

Date: 09/28/2024

Comment:

It would be so fantastic to have direct rail along the rt 2 corridor! I'm sure it would be economically beneficial. I know I and my friends would use this for regular visits for Boston-area shopping, cultural events and medical facilities. Also, I've known several people over the years who are commuting for work to eastern MA from Greenfield or points further west, and they would immensely benefit from public transportation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 404

Name: Harold Bronk

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I would love for there to be frequent passenger rail service in western Mass. Public transportation is a crucial part of society.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. Service frequency would be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 405

Name: Anna Smith

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail along route 2!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 406

Name: Carolyn Hicks

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I strongly support east/west rail along route 2 and along route 90. My family travels to Boston regularly for medical care and truly needs the option!!! When???

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the passenger rail planning and implementation process, and Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts.

Comment 407

Name: Susan Farber

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I support increased round-trip options from Greenfield to Boston. A family member is undergoing specialized medical care in Boston. The burden would be eased for us to ride the train for periodic treatments, vs. 4-5 hours driving to/from the hospital. Rail service would increase equity for Western Mass. residents seeking advanced medical care not available in our local hospitals.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 408

Name: Lynn Benander

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I travel frequently from western Mass. to Boston and the commuting options now are inadequate. Western Mass needs rail service along the Route 2 corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 409

Name: A. L. Wing

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

This would increase sustainable travel, reduce congestion, increase access, and be highly used.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 410

Name: Stacy VanDeveer

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Please Fund the trains! Passenger rail along the Northern tier would drive investment & increase opportunity all along the corridor.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 411

Name: Martha McCluskey

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I strongly support planning and investment in a strong, fast, rail system in Western Massachusetts to especially include rural and small city northern tier communities. I am a resident of Northampton and would frequently use a northern tier rail service to visit areas both in western and eastern and to more easily access points in northern New England. Long term, reducing dependency on costly and environmentally destructive individual cars while increasing travel ease and affordability is key to the economic and social strength of our region. I support careful exploration of how we can pursue the faster northern tier option to make rail the kind of realistic alternative to cars that it is in many areas of Europe and the UK, as a centerpiece of thriving communities. The economic struggles of northern Massachusetts deserve more investment for the state's long term well being.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 412

Name: Debra Scoon

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Our future has to include good mass transit. We are lagging far behind.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 413

Name: Mieke Bomann

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

A rail service across MA Rte. 2 would offer more job opportunities to western Mass residents, cheaper housing opportunities to eastern Mass residents, and alternatives to fossil fuels for everyone.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development, promoting transportation equity, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment were goals of this

study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 414

Name: Mathilda Grace

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail on Rt 2

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 415

Name: John Kapitzky

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

My wife and I think that a Northern Tier passenger rail link would be a long term investment in the Western Mass area that would also benefit the eastern part of our state. It could potentially make housing further west more attractive to people living around Boston and reduce traffic congestion. It would also give people across the state a greater sense of community in our Commonwealth

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 416

Name: Candace Hope

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I'm writing in support of the Northern Tier Corridor. Expanding rail through this portion of our state would be an incredible benefit for our region, allowing residents of Western Mass to access educational and professional opportunities available in the eastern part of our state while still living in a rural area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 417

Name: Faith Kaufmann

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass needs rail service! I will be so happy to take the train in to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your interest.

Comment 418

Name: Kristen DeAngelis

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

My husband and I both have frequent business in Boston, as well as family there. If we had northern tier rail, he would likely commute weekly and I'm sure I'd use it twice monthly.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 419

Name: John Sears

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I live in Hawley and would love to see passenger rail service restored in the Northern Tier Corridor from North Adams to Boston. I believe it would help our local economy and offer a less polluting means of transportation to Boston

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and minimizing the impacts on

public health and the environment were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 420

Name: Kristine Jelstrup

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I live in Shelburne Falls with my family and I enthusiastically support a Northern Tier Passenger Rail service and if we can't get that at least implement a motor coach service. The population of Franklin County is declining and the towns along Rt 2 aren't all doing well and many restaurants and other businesses can't find enough staff. In addition these areas could benefit from more tourists and since lodging is so challenging taking a day trip on a train might encourage more visitors. In addition, so many young people can't afford cars or don't want them so having a train service could get people from Boston out to the Rt 2 towns and could get people from those towns into Boston. We have to drive our son to Springfield so he can take the bus into Boston when he wants to go visit friends. I would love to take the train from Greenfield and not have to drive into Boston when I go to visit friends or for appointments. I for one think it could be great for this region to have passenger train service. 😊

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity by increasing mobility options were goals of this study that guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 421

Name: Zoe Gardner

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I have lived in the CT river valley for over 20 years and it's always felt unnecessarily difficult to get to Boston by public transit. I and so many of my friends and colleagues would love to have a public transit option along the route 2 corridor to better connect western MA with the Boston area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 422

Name: Julia Berman

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail service.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 423

Name: Michelle Parrish

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I am strongly in favor of extended passenger rail services between Western Massachusetts and Eastern Massachusetts. This will be a wonderful investment for the state in terms of accessibility and sustainability, especially if the rail can be run with a minimum of fossil fuel inputs.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and minimizing the impacts of public health and the environment were goals of this study and guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 424

Name: Ryan Cheevers

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western MA deserves high quality electric passenger rail for easy access to the Boston area as well as intra-state transport! Hourly all-day service on EMUs would make a rail option competitive with driving!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Service characteristics, such as electrification, may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your interest.

Comment 425

Name: Arlene Kirsch

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass. has. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 426

Name: Ann McCormack

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Northern Tier Passenger Rail service would be a wonderful addition to the area and I fully support this project!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 427

Name: Pamela White

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Many of us who live along the Northern Tier have been longing for decades for rail access to Boston. Decades. Route 2 is inadequate, even if you're willing to deal with navigation and parking in the city. It's past time to provide this basic public service to our northern communities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study and guided alternatives development. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 428

Name: Heather Couture

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I live in Somerville, MA and have friends and family in western MA and would love love love to have the option of taking a train over the bus.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 429

Name: Noah T. Winer

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass should have passenger rail service just like Eastern Mass! Our family would take it regularly to get to hospital visits, entertainment, and to visit family.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 430

Name: Deborah Schwartz

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like Eastern Mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 431

Name: Devin Ryder

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Yes Yes to creating trains running along the route 2 corridor. I would love to take a train to Boston and back.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 432**Name:** Devlin Farmer**Date:** 09/29/2024**Comment:**

Western mass needs a strong commitment to viable transit like in eastern mass. Train service to Boston please!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 433**Name:** Ambreen Hai**Date:** 09/29/2024**Comment:**

It would be really wonderful to have a train between Springfield and Boston. Currently there is no quick way to get from western Massachusetts to Boston by public transport. If we had a train, it would be well-used.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 434**Name:** Jennifer Sanders James**Date:** 09/29/2024**Comment:**

It's time to fully connect our state again. Bring on the passenger rail! Why would we as a state not want to connect all of our residents?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your interest.

Comment 435**Name:** Vanessa Adel

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I am so happy to hear that there are serious efforts to plan for rail service from western Massachusetts to Boston. This would make such a big difference in our lives and would reduce the need to drive in harrowing traffic, spewing endless tons of carbon. Please let's modernize and make rail systems like they've already had in other countries for more than a century. A car centric culture is not good for a viable, healthy future. And recent studies also show that the expense per person of owning a car is more than new generations can bear what with stagnant wages and rising living costs. Trains! Communal solutions! Aggregating resources. Providing reliable, safe, cheaper, relatively hassle-free mobility. Yes! Please! Thank you!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 436

Name: Richard Ranti

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

I enthusiastically support good regular passenger rail service from the Berkshires to Boston. We would use it almost every week.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 437

Name: Giovanna Bellesia-Contuzzi

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

Western Mass needs frequent, reliable and fast rail service to Boston and to Logan Airport. The only connections now are via bus (not even a direct bus!) and car. The Mass Pike often has too much traffic. Trains would also be better for the environment. A reliable railway system would greatly improve the life of all Massachusetts residents.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, including increasing mobility

options, was a goal of this study that guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 438

Name: Tobi Sznajderman

Date: 09/29/2024

Comment:

We are in support of a northern tier passenger rail route! Connecting the west to the east in MA will be good for both regions.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Comment 439

Name: Edward Feld

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I so look forward to being able to commute to Boston from Northampton. I have both family and doctors in Boston and need to travel there often. It would be helpful not to have to drive. The quicker the rail connection is made, the better.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your current travel experience.

Comment 440

Name: Jacob Wolf

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I would love to be able to take rail to western Mass! It would open up so many options for recreation and play, and would complement the creation of bike trails across the state. I also regularly travel the route 2 corridor for work and take commuter rail, and more rail service is always loved! Thank you for your consideration of the opportunity!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your current travel experience.

Comment 441**Name:** Alice Swersery**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

What about rail or frequent bus from Northampton to Boston?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. At present, PVRTA and the Amtrak Vermonter service provide connections between Northampton and Springfield where intercity bus service may be utilized to travel to Boston. With planned West-East Rail service, a rail connection may be made in Springfield.

Comment 442**Name:** Margo Jones**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

As a citizen of Greenfield, I would strongly urge the creation of an East West railway service between Boston and our region. We utilize the rail service that extends to Fitchburg frequently, and wish there were full service west. Regular, reliable rail service across our state has many benefits, in reducing carbon emissions from cars, supporting economic development along the corridor, and boosting tourism. It will pay great dividends!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 443**Name:** Nabad**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

As a former Eastern MA resident, I would love to see a connection East to West/West to East. I really miss Boston. This rail will be great for students across the state. It would make it possible to get to internships that would otherwise be unobtainable. As well, it will be great for business and tourism for the entire state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 444**Name:** Terry Narkewicz**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

I am 100% supportive of the addition of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier Corridor of Western Massachusetts. Not only would the service boost the local economy of the smaller hill town communities, it would benefit those who lack transportation, save one the hassle of driving into Boston and trying to find parking, and hopefully alleviate some of the parking problems in the Boston area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity were goals of this study and guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 445**Name:** Susan Jillson**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

I want passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor and I think Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass. Western Mass matters!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 446**Name:** Andrew Grottkau**Date:** 09/30/2024**Comment:**

I would love to use passenger rail service along route 2. I commute from Arlington to Devens 3 days a week and would use this service very frequently. Given the growing number of businesses in the Devens area, this corridor would surely become more popular in coming years. It's always better to have infrastructure in place 5 years too early than 5 years too late, and we are approaching "too late" as it is!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 447

Name: J Hanold
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

The Northerner Tier Passenger Rail Study is an important part of the effort to stabilize and grow the economy of Western Massachusetts. The towns proposed for inclusion suffer, at present, from lack of timely access to Boston and Worcester and from inadequate infrastructure investment, and the initiation of passenger service would aid economic development and provide viable options for growth outside the Eastern Mass sector.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of this study and guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 448

Name: Amy Berner
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

A way to get from Northampton to Boston by train would be extremely helpful and would likely bring more dollars to both regions. Citizens go to both places for tourism, medical care, travel to and from Logan, and more. The turnpike is crowded. Please invest in this and the public will use it!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and increasing mobility options were goals of this study and guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 449

Name: K Lambert
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

I want a Northern Tier rail line because my family lives near Acton. I can imagine many more people getting off the roads and onto the rails to travel to see family in Eastern Mass (north of 495). Also the Northern Tier rail line offers so many historic and cultural opportunities for travelers. I'd like to see it go through Acton , Concord and into North Station. It's a great alternative for older travelers as well! Let's not forget to mention getting UMass students off Route 202 and Rt 2 and onto the rails every weekend! Shuttles from 5 Colleges to Greenfield train station anyone?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Additional station stops may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Comment 450

Name: Jim Simon
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

I support the expansion of rail service to Western Mass! Invest in public transportation for equity, environmental, and economic reasons!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 451

Name: Benjamin Post
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

I want passenger rail along Rt 2

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 452

Name: Carol Sharick

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

Western Mass deserves a robust rail network like eastern Mass! Our country as a whole needs more investment in passenger rail, and our state, for sure! Bring it west and make it fast.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 453

Name: Sharon Stevenson

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I would love to see passenger rail service along western Massachusetts's northern corridor. This would greatly improve my life and mobility, and hopefully ease the traffic nightmares.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 454

Name: Irene Tournas

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

A commuter train line connecting the northern berkshires to Boston would be so transformative people living up along the northwestern route 2 corridor. It would not only create an environmentally friendly mode of transportation, but would attract more people and hopefully businesses to the struggling areas of northern Berkshire and Franklin Counties. As a young person living in North Adams, I really believe this would be an important step in serving this area economically, but bringing more visitors and culture into the region. I personally would use this commuter train option, and would encourage friends and family to as well. As a young working person here, it is sometimes hard to see the point in staying, when there are so few other young people in the same phase of life. But I do love this area and feel that this project would be a huge step in the right direction to showing Mass residents and people in New England, that the northern Berkshires matters and has a lot to offer if it is given the chance.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience and support for potential expanded rail service.

Comment 455

Name: Phil Brooks
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

Would love to see rail service from Northampton to Boston. With all the colleges out here I think it would be well-used!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 456

Name: Susan Bronson
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

Improved rail access through the Northern Tier Rail Project would enhance the Yiddish Book Center's ability to attract visitors, scholars, and students to our location in Amherst. It would make it easier for visitors from urban areas, such as Boston, to attend our educational programs, cultural events, and exhibitions, boosting local tourism and fostering greater connectivity and innovation within the arts and cultural sectors of Massachusetts. Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal of this study and guided the development of service alternatives.

Comment 457

Name: Lisa Goodrich
Date: 09/30/2024
Comment:

I would like to travel across the state, the Northeast and into Canada by train. We had all the infrastructure and knowledge to do this, until we let the class I freight railroads dictate

the terms of our national rail service. Most especially, I would like to get to Montreal and Quebec City on occasional weekends with my family. If there was stable east-west service at reasonable times for day trips from WMass, I have relatives that need it for medical appointments in Boston. Finally, if dail east-west service connected with the CT river corridor, people could commute to job opportunities across the state. Please continue and finish this project!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 458

Name: Lauren Duncan

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I would love to have frequent reliable train service between Western MA and Boston. I don't drive on the freeways and so this would really help me out. I would use it every couple of weeks for work and pleasure.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 459

Name: Kathy Reinig

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

northern tier rail, passing through Athol/Orange with a stop in one of those towns, would be of great benefit not only to those of us already here but will provide more housing opportunities for people who work east of us. Compared to eastern towns, all of our housing is affordable. We have the space and are developing the infrastructure to grow. Likewise industry here will benefit from linking more directly to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Economic development was a key component of this study. We welcome your continued engagement.

Comment 460

Name: Leslie Scott

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I am writing to ask for your full support of the Northern Tier Corridor of Western Massachusetts Rail. We desperately need better options for traveling east and west in Massachusetts, to reduce our dependence on car travel, and to make east west travel possible for those who cannot drive (and thus making such travel handicapped accessible!). Thank you for you efforts to support the people of Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Providing more mobility options and improving connectivity were key components of this study. Thank you for sharing your experience.

Comment 461

Name: Leslie Scott

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

I am writing to ask for you full support in creating this needed option for east to west and west to east travel via the Northern Tier Passenger Rail system.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 462

Name: Cliff Black

Date: 09/30/2024

Comment:

A northern passenger rail line would be a huge economic and social benefit for Northern Mass residents, and would ease congestion and reduce accidents on Route 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 463

Name: J Zimmer

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Rail service between Boston and western Mass. will save consumers fuel and time, and it will jumpstart cultural and business exchanges between the eastern and western parts of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 464

Name: Linda Ellis

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Please support the northern passenger rail service. It is needed

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 465

Name: Meredith Lewis

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

As a resident of Western Mass, I'd love to see accessible regular service to Boston. In particular, I have a student in Franklin County and teach at Brandeis University. The thought of being able to access not only 1 but both of those stops on the same train line would be life changing for our family's economic vitality.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 466

Name: Brigitte Buettner

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Any form of public transport that is regular, frequent, and reliable is essential. The state of public transportation in this country is an embarrassment; it would be great to see Massachusetts spearhead a change in the right direction by making all forms of public transport much more robustly present everywhere

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Goals of this study included promoting transportation equity by increasing mobility options in Western Massachusetts and improving connectivity. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 467

Name: Anna Terwiel

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Rail service to Boston would be fantastic. I already take the Amtrak train from Northampton to Springfield, Hartford, New Haven, and NYC as much as possible. Rail service from Western Mass to Boston would take cars off the road and significantly increase quality of life for many people in Western Mass who need access to Boston for work, medical care, etc.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 468

Name: Elias Venegas

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I believe having a rail from northern western MA to Boston (and viceversa) would be beneficial for all communities whether it is for daily commute or to visit the available areas. This would increase safe travel and mitigate congestion on route 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 469

Name: Dan Lauber

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail on route 2. I would use it for Friday/ weekend service to visit Charlemont from Boston. I would need at least one Sunday evening train into Boston. I would love the station at Charlemont brought back, but the Greenfield station would be ok. I currently drive, so it would reduce cars on rte 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 470

Name: Dan Lauber

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I support passenger rail on route 2. I would use it to commute between Somerville and Groton/Ayer about once a week.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 471

Name: Rebecca Mandel

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail along the rte 2 corridor! I would love to be able to visit my friends in the Boston Metro area more safely and cleanly than my current sole option, which is a car

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 472

Name: Eric Eid-Reiner

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

This would be fantastic, and is long overdue! I hope East-West rail service in Massachusetts becomes a reality in Massachusetts very soon. It would make a difference for so many people.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 473

Name: Ada Munroe

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail on Rt 2. I want more passenger rail

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 474

Name: Chris Cheek

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Western MA, desperately needs affordable, reliable and frequent rail service with connections to Boston and New York city. This area has a wealth of academic and artistic human resources and a real need to keep this community in circulation with the metropolises on the eastern coast. It would be a great help, in addition, to help keep cars of the heavily congested and often dangerous highways that cross the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 475

Name: Charles Staelin

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Having a fast rail link from Western Mass to Boston would do a lot to ease the commute into the city, especially as the Pike gets more and more congested. Having a similar link from Springfield would really help to connect the two halves of the Commonwealth

together. A schedule that would allow one to go in in the morning and back in the early evening would be great.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. MassDOT continues to coordinate with our partners on increasing mobility, connectivity, and access. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 476

Name: Katharine Lange

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

Hello, as a car-free Greater Boston resident, I so want to see Northern Tier Rail become a reality so I can visit the musical, cultural, and recreational events and spaces that this corridor offers. I want the Commonwealth to build electrified rail (why wait for advocate pressure, like we're seeing with the Fairmount Line? This route goes through many environmental justice communities who don't need to breathe in diesel). I prefer the one-seat trips rather than the two-seat option, and would also support the local stops in Porter, Athol and Shelburne Falls. There's obviously a huge climate imperative to pursue this project, but the community-building and economic development bonuses will be even more fulfilling. Please build this! Connect the Commonwealth! I'm so excited to enjoy weekends in Franklin and Berkshire Counties (assuming bikes would be allowed on board - that's huge for my friend group!). Thanks very much for your work, and please proceed without delay.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 477

Name: Matthew Elia

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

This would be a valuable asset for me to get to different areas of Massachusetts I often frequent for recreation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 478

Name: Sarah-Jane Poindexter

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

The Northern Tier Corridor would be a game changer for my commute to Boston for work, and for cultural excursion along the route.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The study aimed to develop and assess alternatives that could increase mobility options and support economic development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 479

Name: Kevin Chen

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I want passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 480

Name: Doone MacKay

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

This train route would be incredibly useful! I regularly drive along route 2 to many of these places, usually on weekends. Having a train option to run errands and meet friends without my car would be fantastic!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 481

Name: Jason Cusimano

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I live in a rural Franklin County town, and I am opposed to any rail service to Western Massachusetts. We are already being inundated with people moving out of the city to the point where kids growing up around us can't buy a starter home. The price of my house has doubled, which means nothing to me as I am not moving. People can't find a place to live. All of our apartments are turning into Airbnb for tourists and as an employer in Franklin County I can't find anyone to work. I see no need to make it easier for people to live out here and work out east, give the money it would cost a fund such a project to rural schools that are struggling to educate our children.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 482

Name: Marc Maquiling

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

I'd like passenger rail along Route 2

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 483

Name: Stevie Alvarez

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

Adding passenger trains to the Northern Tier Corridor rail not only allows easier transportation access, but also appeals to younger generations. Any expansion of train infrastructure (or any public infrastructure for that matter) is appreciated by the majority of the younger generations. This rail development would expand transportation access to those who physically or financially might not be able to participate in our car based infrastructure -- from the elderly, to the disabled, to the impoverished, among others, this would be an incredibly important development.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this effort and guided the development of the service alternatives.

Comment 484

Name: Jacqueline Alvarez

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

I am a strong supporter of a passenger rail line along Route 2 from North Adams to Boston. If this were in place, I would access Boston much more often, which I currently avoid because driving there is a nightmare. This would also really be a positive step in addressing climate change. The state of MA and the USA as a whole needs to do better with public transportation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options between Western and Eastern Massachusetts and supporting climate change measures were objectives for this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your comment.

Comment 485

Name: Rose Jackson

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

Would be SO GREAT to have rail service all the way from W Mass to Boston...for travel, for work, for visiting the city. I make fairly regular trips for work, and it's a drag to have to drive an hour and 20 min to Fitchburg to catch the train into the city. I'd use it a lot more often if I could catch it from Greenfield and not have to deal with earlier parking or a ride!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Increasing mobility options was a goal of this study that guided alternatives development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 486

Name: Kevin Parsons

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

This is a waste of resources that can be allocated to infrastructure improvements/repairs which are already in severe need of funds. I am not sure how much the train/Amtrack is being used out of Greenfield, but I would imagine without the substantial government subsidies this project is not viable. Please take a look at this project's financial viability on it's own, without considerable state and federal funds being used to not only build it, but to keep it upright. I doubt the ridership will be sufficient to support such an effort. I also question the ecological impact to our communities while we have more diesel trains motoring through Shelburne Falls spewing exhaust. We have much more pressing needs right now... like taking care of what we have... without this apparent luxury item for a few that might avail themselves to this impractical service.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 487

Name: Charles Malloch

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

I had to make frequent trips with my sweetie to Boston for her to get cancer treatment at MGH. We both would have been much more comfortable had passenger rail been available. Although she's no longer with us, I'm sure others are in the same position and would benefit from the Northern Tier route.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 488

Name: Melanie Huq

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

Rail travel is important for ensuring people have access to reliable and environmentally-friendly transportation between different regions in Massachusetts. I support any policy that ensures that people in Western Mass can benefit from this important public good.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 489

Name: Ethan Tupelo

Date: 10/02/2024

Comment:

I've had to go between Greenfield and Boston a few times a month over the last few years. Restarting this project would be great, I would take the train all the time. I'm also excited about making places farther west more accessible. This could allow people from Boston to take easy trips to MassMOCA in North Adams for example.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 490

Name: Thomas Meshako

Date: 10/01/2024

Comment:

October 1, 2024 Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning Massachusetts Department of Transportation 10 Park Plaza Boston, Massachusetts 02116 Dear Secretary, Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler: We write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project At Greenfield Savings Bank, we are grounded in our values: Care, Connection, Community, and Communication. These values form the foundation of our service to the communities we serve throughout the Pioneer Valley. Over the past seven years, GSB has doubled in size, enabling us to double the amount of community support that we provide to the community by way of contributions and volunteerism by our Team Members. Over the past three years, we have been able to provide over \$1 million annually, to over 350 organizations throughout the Valley. As a 155-year-old organization, Greenfield Savings Bank is rooted to provide long-term support and stability to the Western Massachusetts economic region. We are a leading financial institution in Franklin and Hampshire County, and we are ambitious with our growth trajectory, to expand our relationship focused business model to assist consumers and business with their financial needs. We provide the Commonwealth with a proven track record of workforce support, economic production, and corporate leadership amongst our peers throughout the Commonwealth. The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth. Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large,

communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older. Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth. As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west. We have long discussed better connecting the East and West in our state and this project is the fruition of those dreams. We look forward to seeing this effort completed and the ease of travel realized as both sides of our state have so much to offer each other. The ease of rail travel and the endless possibilities for collaboration excite us at Greenfield Savings Bank as we look forward to increased hiring potential, ease of in person communication with the Boston contingencies, and growth of our mutual economies. The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options. Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our under-looked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality. Warmest regards, Thomas Meshako
President & CEO

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives.

Comment 491

Name: Holly Stenson

Date: 10/03/2024

Comment:

Having a connection to eastern MA other than auto is crucial to northwest MA. The recent investments in area is showing that people with disposable income are coming to build up this area. The Northern Tier rail will only help grow the new populations discovering Northern Berkshires. For those of us that reside here the connection helps with specialist appointments in the Boston area. It eases the congestion of bring more cars to the city for work, sporting events, arts, music events and travel. The idea of flying in from Europe to Logan and being able to travel back to my home in North Adams via public transportation has positive environmental impacts. Looking at it from a tourist point of view it opens up the ability for city dwellers to visit the Berkshires without the hassle of renting a car to get out of the city. More tourists with disposable income is what this area needs. This area will benefit.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 492

Name: Marko Iwasiwka

Date: 10/03/2024

Comment:

As a resident of Western Massachusetts residing in Berkshire County who frequently visits Boston, this is a project that I would highly encourage the state to pursue. While I am fortunate enough to own a car which provides the ability to drive to the Eastern part of the state, I try to take Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited as much as possible given I do not enjoy the nearly three-hour drive. However, Amtrak's schedule is inconvenient, and having a consistent, dedicated form of public transportation between both sides of the state would not only be beneficial for the entirety of Berkshire and Franklin counties, but it would also benefit those living in the Eastern part of the state just as well. It would allow for access to the Berkshires' ski resorts and natural attractions, while also allowing access to Boston's renowned healthcare facilities. I hope that the state will consider pursuing this project not only for the benefit of the residents of Western Massachusetts, but as a benefit to the entire state as a whole.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 493

Name: Cameron Smith

Date: 10/03/2024

Comment:

The towns that make up the Berkshires, all characterized by their isolation from the rest of Massachusetts, would benefit from a railway system that would allow people to circulate in and out of two parts of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This study aimed to develop and assess alternatives that could increase connectivity and mobility options. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 494

Name: Subramanian Vaitheeswaran

Date: 10/03/2024

Comment:

The Northern Tier rail along the Route 2 corridor, connecting western Mass. with Boston will bring enormous benefits. It can boost the economy of the entire region and reduce environmental impacts by taking thousands of single-occupancy vehicles off the roads. PLEASE make it happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 495

Name: Robert Ciskowski

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

This project is a waste of time and money. How many riders on the western end of the proposed project will there be? Not many. The money spent on this project compared to the benefit of so few would be an embarrassment .

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 496

Name: Caitlin Randall

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

I strongly back Alternative #5, extending rail service to Albany. There is a huge market for rail service to Boston from the Albany area and nearby Vermont. By ignoring this important hub, the NY state capital, Mass DOT is failing a huge portion of travelers eager for a carbon-free, safer, and easier way to get back and forth to Boston. Amtrack's Albany-NYC train service is a much-used corridor that hundreds of Vermonters rely on. A train route to Boston would be applauded and well-used by Vermonters and northern New Yorkers alike. Please don't forget us in this commendable project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and your support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 497

Name: Harris Pasettiner

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

A trail network extending through Western Mass would be hugely helpful for me and my family.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 498

Name: Paula Consolini

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

I commend the MassDOT team, which has prepared this very thorough study. One suggestion: Since the economic impact calculations count only the benefits from project construction and not the growth from the presence of rail service, I recommend that this limitation and its impact on ridership projections be included in the report conclusion.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Please note that Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand.

Comment 499

Name: Amanda Rood

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

Western Massachusetts deserves a robust rail network like eastern Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 500

Name: Katherine Richardson

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

Thank you for undertaking this study. As a young professional in Berkshire county, access to public transportation is absolutely a top determining factor in my family's decision to stay in Western Massachusetts long-term. Considering benefits-- psychosocial, economic, and equitability-- in your assessments and public communications would help to relay the fuller picture of why investment in commuter rails are important. The opportunity growth is a game-changer for equity and well-being for Western Massachusetts residents. I think it's also important to recognize the potential a modernized commuter rail service would have for the state of Massachusetts. Beyond increasing connectivity, it makes choosing Massachusetts as a long-term home drastically more attractive. Young professional peers (read: soon-to-be first-time homeowners) entering the job market are looking to balance access to cosmopolitan centers of innovation--epitomized by Boston-- with the pull of serene small towns for owning homes, raising families, and building community. With the development of a commuter rail, western Massachusetts would become one of few alternatives to the car-centric suburbs that offer such a balance. Aging family members, too, would consider moving here too with such developed rail connectivity. Losing the ability to drive would not impact one's quality of life here. It would also be lovely to know that community members afflicted by poverty would have the burden of transportation somewhat eased, and their roads somewhat less congested. In short, please also promote human-centric factors related to improved quality of life post-construction when considering your level of investment in this project. Thank you very much.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 501

Name: Leslie Gura

Date: 10/04/2024

Comment:

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the well-being and goals of the entire Commonwealth. Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining populations and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older. Yes, the costs of investing in any of alternatives have a negative NPV (could be improved by better growth assumption (see my comment below); however investment would provide robust benefits for the Commonwealth for a vastly longer period than the 30 year time frame used. Additionally, some of the costs could be phased over a longer time period. Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth. As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. I question the assumption of NO GROWTH in the Western portion of the Commonwealth. Certainly rail itself will generate growth. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west. I would visit and fly out if the Boston area frequently were rail service available from North Adams. The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options. Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of this study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experience.

Comment 502

Name: Nancy Wood

Date: 10/05/2024

Comment:

Having train service from Boston to North Adams would be a big boost to the economy of North Adams. It would encourage more tourism in the area. So many people in Boston area don't have/need cars but would visit the area if there was rail service. Family in Gardner took the rail to Porter Square in Cambridge when there was a stop there many years ago. It was disappointing when service stopped.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experience.

Comment 503

Name: Jocelyn Chapman

Date: 10/05/2024

Comment:

I moved from San Francisco to Pittsfield and now I live in Adams Massachusetts. I am very disappointed in my options to get to an airport and where to leave my car when I fly. I can drive to Albany I can drive to Boston I can drive to New York and I can drive to Bradley or I can pay someone to drive me at about \$1000 for both ways. One day I would imagine we will have real uber service but being able to travel west and get to the capital would be incredible! The northern part of the Berkshires is an incredible spot with world class museums and many people don't make it here. I live in a building that has a train station in the parking lot. I live in a building that used to have electric trolleys serving it. When I look at the train that sits right outside of my building I'm so sad that we don't have access to New York Springfield New Haven Boston Hartford Albany. As once we did. It would be really great to know the history of why these trains were dismantled. I believe that the car industry intentionally tore up a lot of the public transit throughout the nation. This is the solution to our dependence on fossil fuel. I lived in Pittsfield when the flyer came and the service just isn't regular enough. And it doesn't serve people in Pittsfield that might like to go to New York. I get it that it was an attempt to find out how many people are interested. But I do

think without Uber in the area you need to make sure that there's a car rental location somewhere near the train station where people are dropped off. Train service from North Adams to Boston would be away for us here to at least get to a transit hub

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comments regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 504

Name: Alley Stoughton

Date: 10/05/2024

Comment:

I travel between North Adams and Boston for work. I work remotely from home most days, but need to work at Boston University some days.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 505

Name: Charlie Tharas

Date: 10/05/2024

Comment:

This passenger rail project would be very helpful in enabling easy, car-free travel to Boston for internships, job opportunities, visits to other academic institutions, and social visits. It is also important on a grander scale to rebuild the rail network that once unified this country, powered its economy, and produced the American culture as we know it. The reality is that as nice as driving is, cars are bad for us as a people. They make us dirty, fat, lonely, poor, and sad.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 506

Name: Stacey Dreher

Date: 10/06/2024

Comment:

We would love regular train from the Northern Berkshire to Boston or New York. It would boost the local economy

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 507

Name: Frank Mooney

Date: 10/06/2024

Comment:

Rail service to western mass along the Rte 2 corridor could provide a boost to struggling small town economies. I would expect the influx of people to be concentrated in the warm months. As population shrinks, staple businesses are struggling to survive and need more support from residents outside the small towns. A strong tourism season during the warm months keep businesses viable year-round. Those who fear overcrowding and annoyance from outsiders would do well to step back and reflect on their lament when a good restaurant goes out of business or a good artisan gallery that they enjoy inevitably fails because the local economy cannot support it alone.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 508

Name: Stephen Stenson

Date: 10/06/2024

Comment:

As a resident of North Adams I encourage the State to pursue this project not only because of the Convenience of having a train to Boston but also the environmental benefits and increase in business that would result from completing a rail line.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 509

Name: Leslie Scott

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I am writing to urgently request that you give full support to the Northern Tier Rail service that would connect western Massachusetts to Boston. This is a much needed service. Thank you for your efforts and time already dedicated to this project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 510

Name: Cailean Fippinger

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

Western Massachusetts (in this context, areas within the 413 area code) is a part of the state that has long been disconnected from Boston, both geographically and financially. Until I went to university in Boston, the eastern half of this relatively small state felt incredibly far from me. I brought my business—and my money—to Albany, rather than my own state capital. I didn't care about what happened in Boston. With the closures of manufacturing plants such as General Electric in Pittsfield and Sprague Electric in North Adams, Berkshire county has seen its economy gutted and replaced by tourism, and has not had its population grow since 1970. A rail connection to the state's capital would not only bring business and people to the western parts of the state, but would show the most disconnected citizens of Massachusetts that the state government has their best interest at heart. The six alternatives put forth by the DOT study provide an excellent diversity of options for this proposed rail project. The first I would argue for is alternative 1, simply because something is better than nothing. Having this connection would be revolutionary, and would multiply cross-state train travel fivefold, given that we currently see one train come through Pittsfield per day. However, I would much rather see alternative 3 built, for multiple reasons. As the highest projected creator of jobs, it would create stable work for those already in western Massachusetts and attract people to move there. It would be the most environmentally friendly option, and is projected to have the highest ridership out of all options with the best transportation cost savings. Additionally, no matter what alternative is chosen, this project would lower traffic on route 2, a great benefit for drivers and the environment. I hope that MassDOT can see the incredible benefits that this project would have for transit in the state of Massachusetts. It would bring western and eastern MA together, reducing traffic congestion and benefiting the environment as well. The future of public transit is the future of America, and Massachusetts can be the first to step into the future with this project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study and support for Alternative 3. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 511

Name: Ralph Stern

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

Having a passenger rail system operating along the Northern Tier Corridor would serve to help revive the struggling economies of Northern Tier communities, including Fitchburg, Greenfield, and North Adams. A North Adams connection would permit people from Western Massachusetts to more easily travel to Boston to enjoy cultural amenities or to get leading-edge medical care, and it would make it possible for people in the Boston area who do not drive, or who wish to avoid driving, to enjoy the cultural amenities of Western Massachusetts. North Adams, in particular, has an extraordinary cultural amenity, Mass MoCA, in which the Commonwealth has invested many millions of dollars, but it is essentially inaccessible to people who do not drive. A good rail link between North Adams and Boston, one that would allow the trip to be roughly 3 hours duration, would be an economic boon. In addition, it has the potential to help the Commonwealth achieve its CO2 emissions targets.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 512

Name: Pamela Grey

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

Being able to commute by rail into my job at Harvard Medical School in Boston without having to drive the hour to the Fitchburg/Wachusett Station would improve my quality of life, reduce my environmental impact, and give me more time to work during my commute. From a less selfish perspective, it would also increase access to all of the affordable housing here in the north western part of the state. For these and many other reasons, I strongly support this project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Improving connectivity and access was an important part of this study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 513

Name: Jim Reische

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

What does it mean to call Massachusetts a state—or, better yet, a commonwealth? How can we lay claim to that idea of common interest unless we're connected? Travel within state boundaries is one of the main ways that happens. It gives economic, social, cultural and political meaning to the idea of Massachusetts as an entity—not just a bunch of land that someone drew a line around. Highways did the work for us for a few decades, but they're increasingly hard to justify in terms of their environmental and community impact. Unless we invest in rail, we risk becoming a fractured, incoherent constellation of communities. If the leaders in Boston care about the people of Massachusetts as much as they claim, this rail project is an important way to show it. The results will be greater economic interaction and development for rural areas, more tourism, reductions in carbon output, fewer highway accidents, etc. And to one point in particular: those of us who live in rural areas of the country know what it's like to have to make your way with a lack of healthcare providers, poor access to services, cultural and educational deficits, and the like. This project has huge potential to better match the state's workers and employment opportunities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 514

Name: Gianna Ericson

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I am strongly in support of additional rail service between Eastern and Western MA. Such service would dramatically improve the ease with which myself, my family, and my colleagues could travel between necessary destinations to which we currently drive quite frequently. It seems like a big oversight that there is no easy way to get from the Boston area to the pioneer Valley or the Berkshires wild transit between Connecticut/New York City has

multiple options for getting to western MA and Vermont via train.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 515

Name: Laurence Wilson

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I am a huge supporter of the Norther Tier Rail. Having grown up in eastern mass, the Berkshires were a land of mystery to me. Now as a 6+year resident (on and off), I implore the state to push for this project to increase the economic and cultural sectors across the state. The implications of this passenger line would be felt throughout the state. With proper planning and community involvement, local and regional economies have the potential to reconnect with wealth opportunities, previously lost. This would include the increased diversification of the physical workforce, access to jobs throughout the state and new avenues of tourism. Similarly, many aspects of Boston's economy and cultural centers would thrive. Massachusetts residents would have easier access to medical specialists, other forms of transportation such as Logan Airport, and many cultural beacons such as concerts, parades and sporting events.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Economic development and increased connectivity and mobility options were key components of this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 516

Name: Michael Bedford

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

The opening of rail traffic between Boston and through North Adams would be a huge plus for the region and the state. (1) Lessening of car traffic via route 2 and Mass Pike would be a positive gain for the environment; (2) Economic benefits would be a logical extension on the investment the state already placed in MassMOCA, the state provided over \$9 million in bond funding for Adams Greylock Glen. tourism would likely excel, and create new local opportunities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input about environmental and economic benefits, which were evaluated as part of this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 517

Name: Pamela Hersch

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

It would be a dream and a relief to have this train be a reality. It would improve so many people's lives and the impact on the environment would be positive. I'm hoping this can happen soon. Thank you so much

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 518

Name: Bob Malnati

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I support Alt#2 as the option making the most sense to me. The 2 hour 48 minute ride from North Adams to Boston would help reduce vehicle traffic entering Boston, thus reducing congestion along Route 2 or the Mass Pike. The 5 daily trips offered could be very useful to attend events in Boston without parking issues, especially for day or weekend excursions. The financial impact of the project could assist the region by starting in North Adams and working towards Fitchburg. This way the jobs and peripheral economic surge would impact the area needing the infusion the most.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study and support for Alternative 2. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 519

Name: Erika Berland

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I am totally in favor of this initiative and I see it as having a very valuable impact on N. Adams desirability as a place to live and it will totally have a big impact on economic development for N. Adams. We have incredible art and culture in N. Adams and how wonderful to be able to share it more easily.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 520

Name: Ann Scott

Date: 10/07/2024

Comment:

I would LOVE LOVE LOVE to have the train come thru the Northern Tier. I'd go back and forth to many of the towns along the way, especially Boston! This would be a godsend. I'm a huge fan of train travel. I lived in Boston for 35+ years, never had a car and got everywhere by T, Amtrak and commuter rail. I loved it! So please, I'm begging you, make this happen...it's so exciting! Thank you!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 521

Name: Sarah Sutro

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

I think North Adams needs this rail link - the one thing it doesn't have now is a way to get to Boston - or Albany by public transportation. Having a train line with multiple times to travel would make eastern MA visitors flock to the Northern Berkshires, but also provide people living in North Adams a way to easily access all that Boston offers, including jobs. It makes sense that the two ends of the state - that each have immense amounts of culture, business and social connections should be joined. I can't tell you how many times I've said "It's great living in North Adams, except there's no way to get to Boston." I think it would be a huge boost to the economy out here, and give more people the chance to spend time in NA who are stuck in the city.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 522

Name: Suzette Martin

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

Everyone who already lives and works in our region (including our neighbors in southern Vermont) will greatly benefit from climate friendly options to travel back and forth to the eastern metropolitan areas. Migration due to climate change in the coastal areas of New England will, without a doubt, foster movement inland, as will technologies that allow remote work and the expensive costs of living in the Boston metropolitan area. As our region prepares for population growth, the expenses, in the long run, will be well worth the initial costs of building.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts about environmental concerns and demographic changes.

Comment 523

Name: Peter Perry

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

I understand

MassDOT Response: Thank you for taking the time to submit comment on the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 524

Name: Jeanne M. Douillard

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

I am watching the news on creating a northern tier Passenger Rail with avid interest. I live in Greenfield, MA and would love to be able to get on the train here in town instead of having to travel an hour by car before getting on the Commuter Rail to Boston. I believe this decision would greatly benefit all of Massachusetts and would be a boon for those of us who live in

the western part of the state. Please consider voting for this rail line.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 525

Name: Charlotte Luke

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

We are long overdue to have rail connections in northwestern Massachusetts!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 526

Name: Lorie Bolte

Date: 10/08/2024

Comment:

North Adams is cut off to the rest of the state. What should be a 45 minute drive is an hour and a half or more. Rail service would allow residents to access very needed medical care both physical and mental as the services here are almost non existent. Rail service would be a game changer as it would also boost tourism to the area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This study aimed to develop and evaluate alternatives that could increase connectivity and mobility options. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 527

Name: Stephanie Boyd

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

I am writing to support the northern tier rail project. Transportation to and from large metropolitan centers is important for the well-being and economic health of the more rural western regions of the commonwealth. We, in western Massachusetts, are dependent upon fast, reliable, effective transportation from the Berkshires across the Commonwealth to Boston. It will enable our residents to have more robust employment opportunities,

access top notch health care resources, participate in higher education opportunities and more. It will also support the reduction in fossil fuel use and our commitment to greenhouse gas reduction. In addition, the rail service will bring people from other areas of the commonwealth to our region, supporting our tourism industry and other economic ventures in the Berkshires. It's a win-win. I appreciate the excellent work done to date and the report that has been produced. In the economic impact calculations, I noticed that the benefits beyond those from project construction, just as the potential for economic growth in the Berkshire, are not included. This results in possible underestimation of future ridership too. There are ways that infrastructures upgrades could be phased in overtime or reduced I scope to lessen the financial burden. These include ensuring that freight rail track improvements are coordinated with planned improvements of the passenger rail project; along with staging or reducing the scale of the train station construction. Please continue to find ways to make the northern rail project a reality. Respectfully, Stephanie Boyd Williamstown Select Board member

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. Please note that Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies and advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand.

Comment 528

Name: Jim Kolesar
Date: 10/09/2024
Comment:

First, enormous thanks for your hard work on this important project. What remaining comments I have on the rather thorough draft would be possibly to expand the section on economic impacts to include those generated by the every day presence of the service, and, especially in light of the track owner's applications for federal grants and of the possibility of building stations over time, perhaps to look more closely at options for staging the project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 6 includes advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand and evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies as recommended next steps.

Comment 529**Name:** Carolina Echenique**Date:** 10/09/2024**Comment:**

We are in desperate need of this rail service out here in the Berkshires! It should not be easier to get here by train from NYC or elsewhere than Boston and the rest of the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 530**Name:** Nancy Nysten**Date:** 10/09/2024**Comment:**

The Williamstown COOL (CO2 Lowering) Committee is pleased to write in support of the Northern Tier passenger rail service, and funding to proceed with recommended next steps outlined in the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study released by MA DOT in August 2024. The Williamstown COOL Committee is a citizen led climate action committee founded in 2001 whose mission is to promote sustainable living practices in Williamstown in a way that inspires community engagement, prompts individual action, and promotes exchange of ideas and practices in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An efficient and reliable passenger rail service supports not only the core mission of the COOL Committee to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also several of the priority goals and recommended actions outlined in the recently released Williamstown Climate Action Plan. The Williamstown Climate Action Plan, developed by a task force comprised of representatives from all sectors of our community, identifies transportation as one of the key contributors to local greenhouse gas emissions. More specifically, approximately one third of greenhouse gas emissions are associated with fueling passenger and commercial vehicles. Key actions outlined in the plan are to 1) develop and promote alternatives to personal vehicles; 2) participate in regional discussions on transportation and increase coordination with neighboring towns to support public transportation needs and initiatives; and 3) provide input re: transportation needs and advocate to support use of non-fossil fuel forms of transportation. Study, planning and implementation of the Northern Tier passenger rail service, including plans for electrification of the infrastructure that we encourage to be powered by renewable energy, supports each of these key recommendations of the Williamstown Climate Action Plan. Expanded access to cities and towns, across the Northern Tier, using a cleaner, more efficient, and equitable form of transportation, is a win-win for our region and the entire state. Benefits include increased employment, tourism, recreational and cultural opportunities that will help our environment, our

economy, and our quality of life. We are appreciative of the work and commitment to exploring the feasibility of passenger rail service to the Northern Tier to-date and look forward to helping work toward making it a reality in the future. Sincerely, Williamstown COOL Committee <https://www.coolwilliamstown.org> Wendy Penner, Chair Susan Abrams Stephanie Boyd Sarah Gardner Elizabeth Kolbert Nancy Nylen Anne O'Connor Tanja Srebotnjak

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 531

Name: J M
Date: 10/09/2024
Comment:

It would be great to have other options besides JUST ONE DAILY AMTRAK that arrives in Boston well after supper. Having a train in Pittsfield is great, but having one in North Adams would be better, especially with more than time option for leaving. This would improve options especially for people needing specialized health care only found in Boston. If you're gonna run commuter trains it'd be great if you had a one-level car. Keolis has very limited seating for people with mobility issues. Those of us with mobility hardships should be considered. We are people too. IDK if you can get Amtrak to run such a limited route. The map of the route looks like it stops before Boston. Is that correct?

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives. Given the intercity nature of Northern Tier Passenger Rail, please note that Amtrak provides most U.S. intercity service and possesses a statutory right to operate on any other railroad in the country. Regarding potential stopping patterns along the Northern Tier, Alternative 3, Alternative 4, and Alternative 5 each include Porter Square as a proposed stop prior to Boston North Station.

Comment 532

Name: Rex Bedwick
Date: 10/09/2024
Comment:

As a college student, it would be extremely valuable to have rail service from Northwestern Massachusetts to Boston to allow for easier commutes to Logan airport to return home. Trips by car or other private transportation are currently costly and challenging to coordinate.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 533

Name: Ronan Murphy

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

Improved rail service would be vital for this area. We moved to the Northern Berkshires less than a year ago. When we were weighing the pros and cons of living and bringing our business to this area, one of the biggest things in the negative column was the lack of transportation infrastructure to the major cities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 534

Name: Paul Moriarty

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

I am strongly in favor of passenger rail expansion that would provide transportation (round trip) from North Adams to Boston. When I moved to the Berkshires in the early 1980s one of the major projects being looked at was how to quickly access North Adams to the Mass Pike. Obviously, that didn't happen. Rail expansion would improve tourism for North Adams; increase tourism in other parts of the state as our residents would be able to make that trip quicker; and it would be a huge economical boon for the area. It's a win win for everyone.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts about economic development and improved connectivity, which was a key components of this study.

Comment 535

Name: Jesse Porter

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

This would be a step in the right direction for MA transit

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 536

Name: David Moresi

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

This will facilitate my travel to Boston which occurs 1-2 times per month as well as plans my wife and I have to purchase a second home in Boston. We often take frequent weekend trips to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 537

Name: Walter Klinger

Date: 10/09/2024

Comment:

It is very important to run the train service through to Rensselaer NY (option 5) with a passenger stop in Pownal Vt. We need the connection to both Boston and NYC. A Pownal station would serve all Southwestern VT. The VTAOT TracII study (fifteen years ago) marked Bennington county and Southwest Vermont as underserved by passenger rail. Tran service is essential here to reducing Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts' carbon emissions.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 538

Name: Celia Montgomery

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

I would use this rail service frequently and hope you will take this effort seriously. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 539

Name: Rebecca Cyr

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

It would be lovely to not be disconnected to the rest of the state the way we are now and have been. So many of us would take full advantage of the railways if we had easier access to it. We seem to be a forgotten demographic. Even the passenger train from Pittsfield to NYC is not for any local person to go to the city for the weekend. It is only for the city people to come here on a Friday and return to the city on a Sunday. There is no service in reverse because again...we are a forgotten bunch. We certainly pay our fair share in taxes but rarely are we given what others East of Springfield get. Please rectify this.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. MassDOT continues to coordinate with our partners on increasing mobility, connectivity, and access. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 540

Name: Diane Parsons

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

As someone who has used passenger rail frequently over many years to access destinations related to my work or vacation, I enthusiastically support the RETURN of rail transport along the Northern Tier Corridor of Western Massachusetts. It would reopen economic opportunities to us residents of North Berkshire as well as cultural exchange opportunities to all from Boston to North Adams.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The study aimed to develop and assess alternatives that could

access to destinations and support economic development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 541

Name: Nancy Bullett

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

It is an important connection to provide many an opportunity to travel by rail to the eastern part of the state for special events, visiting Boston and all it has to offer. Environmentally, it appears this plan would fit well with the greening of the state and efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. Socially, it's a wonderful opportunity for families to travel together, to learn and see the state in a different light. We in the far western end of the state would be benefit from federal and state funding for this project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 542

Name: Amy Stratford

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Public transportation is important to addressing climate change. I support the Route 2 rail. Thank you.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 543

Name: Brendan Connolly

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

A rail service that follows Route 2 would be phenomenal

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 544

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. Page 6, Figure 1.2 Service Characteristics This table indicates that the “coverage area” for the study is “limited to Massachusetts vs. extending into Vermont and New York.” This wording appears to indicate that the ridership estimates in the draft report are limited to riders within the catchment areas as defined within the study document, and that the report has not considered the possibility of intercity rail riders who might connect in Greenfield with the proposed Northern Tier Service. We think it is very important to carefully factor in the potential ridership that could exist with a timed connection between the Vermonter and points east of Greenfield, in particular Boston. In 2016 the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Vermont Agency of Transportation, in coordination with the Connecticut Department of Transportation, completed a three-year feasibility and planning study known as the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI Study). This study recommended that a new round trip passenger train between Boston and Montreal via Springfield be established. The projected annual ridership between Eastern MA and Vermont/Montreal for this new service is shown in this table:

Eastern MA – Southern VT	34,700
Eastern MA – Northern VT	28,200
Eastern MA – Montreal	113,100
TOTAL	176,000

riders/year Data source: Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative Study Summary, 2016, page 10 If you were to conservatively estimate that half (50%) of the ridership that was projected in the NNEIRI Study would be willing to travel between Boston and Vermont/Montreal by making a connection in Greenfield we are left with 88,000 riders/year on this route. In this case, roughly 44,000 people per year (approx. 120 people per day on average) would be boarding a train in Boston to travel to Greenfield to connect with the northbound Vermonter and another 44,000 people a year (approx. 120 people per day on average) would be stepping off the southbound Vermonter in Greenfield to board a train destined to Boston. If nothing else we believe that you should explicitly point out that the study did not address the possibility that significant ridership might be generated by people who would use the Northern Tier service to connect to a train traveling to/from Vermont and (in the future) Montreal. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As noted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, each alternative consisted of a combination of infrastructure and service characteristics including stations, coverage area, service structure, frequency of service, span of service, travel time between stations, and physical improvements, with the referenced figure outlining the range of potential options for consideration as part of the alternatives development. Rergarding station

catchment areas, please see Chapter 4 for additional information on these locations and the estimated ridership ranges. While the service area included in NNEIRI differs from that of the Northern Tier, connections to other services would continue to be examined as part of any future permitting or project development.

Comment 545

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. Page 31 Regulatory Baseline section The paragraph in the middle of the page states that the Springfield Terminal [Railway] Company operates the freight rail service on the Pan Am Southern corridor. This information is out of date and should be updated before the final report is issued. The Springfield Terminal Railway Company no longer operates the freight rail service on the Pan Am Southern network. This service, as of September 1, 2023, is now operated by the Berkshire & Eastern Railroad.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The report language has been updated.

Comment 546

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. Pages 38–40 Greenfield | Station Location Access and Area Characteristics On page 38, under Platform Fit, the text read “The tangent section of track opposite the Olver Transit Center, along Deerfield Street, may have adequate space for a 510-foot long platform.” On page 40, the text associated with Figure 3.13 reads “Site of Greenfield ITC and a hypothetical 800-foot platform...” If the site will only support a 510-foot platform, as the wording on page 38 suggests, then a 510-foot platform should be shown and described in Figure 3.13. Additionally, the platform shown in Figure 3.13 (on page 40) would appear to be on the north side of the siding adjacent to the existing timber platform used by Amtrak’s Valley Flyer and the Vermonter service. The north end of the existing siding adjacent to the existing timber platform provides no access to the rail line that leads to North Adams, so it is not clear at all how a platform at this location could be used for Northern Tier Service, unless the study team is contemplating a backup move in and out the siding that is adjacent to the platform. With that said, we think additional wording should be added to this section of the document to more fully explain where the proposed station platform would be relative to Olver Transit Center and the

existing timber platform. We also think the diagram should be updated since it is not at all clear at the moment how the siding in the diagram would serve Northern Tier trains to/from stations to the west. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The report language has been updated.

Comment 547

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. Pages 68 and 83 Both of these pages use the term “Amfleet passenger cars.” Our understanding is that Amtrak intends to replace all of its Amfleet passenger cars with Siemens Venture passenger cars by 2030. We would suggest that this wording be updated since it is likely that any future Northern Tier service would not be using Amfleet passenger cars. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The report language has been updated.

Comment 548

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. Page 79 Alternative 4: Full Local Service This option proposes that a station stop be established in Gardner, MA. We would question the need and the ridership numbers listed for a station stop in Gardner because of Gardner’s close proximity to the existing MBTA Commuter Rail Wachusett station stop. The driving time between the center of Gardner and the MBTA station in Wachusett is 12–14 minutes according to Google Maps. We suspect that most people in the Gardner catchment area will simply continue to drive to the station in Wachusett because of the significant number of frequencies available on the MBTA Commuter Rail between Wachusett and North Station. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As part of the alternatives development process, Working Group members and other stakeholders provided feedback on the Phase 1 alternatives and input on the desired

characteristics for potential inclusion in the development of the Phase 2 service alternatives. This feedback advocated for considering additional station stops in communities across the corridor, including Gardner.

Comment 549**Name:** Ben Heckscher**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

This is a comment on the draft final report. General comment The estimated cost for bridge work seems to be to high The study team has proposed that \$450 million dollars (nearly half a billion dollars) would be needed for bridge restoration work proper to the establishment of passenger rail service on the Pan Am Southern rail corridor. A lay person would ask the obvious question here, which is why would it be necessary to spend \$450 million on bridge rehabilitation when the existing bridges safely support freight trains today. Notably, the bridges along the Knowledge Corridor, many of which are of the same vintage as the bridges on the Northern Tier Corridor, were upgraded to support passenger service at a cost that was a fraction of what the study team says would need to be spent before passenger trains could operate on the Northern Tier Corridor. More should be said in the report to explain why the cost of the bridge work is so high in the draft report compared to what was spent on bridge restoration work on the Knowledge Corridor project. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As noted in Chapter 3, numerous structures, including undergrade bridges that carry the railroad over roadways and waterways and overhead bridges that carry roadways over the railroad, are present. While these structures currently carry freight trains, improvements would be needed to facilitate any addition of passenger services along the corridor. Additional cost estimate information is included in Appendix E.

Comment 550**Name:** Ben Heckscher**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

This is a comment on the draft final report. General Comment Appendix A – Public Engagement Comments provided by individuals members of the working group and members of the public are detailed in the meeting reports, and as part of a section titled “MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary.” We assume that all written comments received were to be included in Appendix A. On February 23, 2023 the Western

Mass Rail Coalition (WMRC) submitted a set of detailed written comments (13 pages) as part of an email that was sent to and acknowledged by the MassDOT Project Manager for this study. None of the WMRC comments referenced above are noted anywhere in Appendix A. We assume that this was an oversight and that the comments have been seen by the study team. With this comment we ask that (a) the WMRC comments dated February 23, 2023 be added to Appendix A of the final report, and (b) that MassDOT check to see if there are other comments that were submitted by email or other means (for example, postal letter) and that any other comments be added to Appendix A of the final report so that the record is complete. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Appendix A has been updated.

Comment 551

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This is a comment on the draft final report. General comment The need for a listing of abbreviations Please add a listing of abbreviations in the final report after the table of contents. Such a listing would allow readers to more easily understand the many abbreviations that are used throughout the report and the appendices, such as: LBS Location-Based Services MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization PAS Pan Am Southern PTC Positive Train Control RTC Rail Traffic Controller Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The report has been updated.

Comment 552

Name: Ben Heckscher

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

These comments are on the draft final report. The proposed restoration of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier Route (also known as the Route 2 Corridor) offers the opportunity for the northern portion of western and central Massachusetts to once again be connected to the Boston Metro region. Passenger service west of Fitchburg along this route was discontinued during the 1950s during a period when personal vehicles became

the predominant means of transportation for almost all long distance intrastate travel in our state. Since then times have changed. The major roadways in and out of Boston are jammed at many times of the day, housing in the eastern part of the state has become so expensive many people (in particular young people) cannot afford to live there, and rising costs have made it more and more expensive to purchase, operate and service a personal vehicle. The time is now to restore passenger rail on the Northern Tier Route by initiating the necessary project planning and development work that would be needed to move the project forward. The restoration of passenger rail service along this corridor would provide a key pillar of support for the many economically disadvantaged communities within this region, which have not prospered economically to nearly the same degree as communities in the eastern part of the state. Renewed passenger rail service along the Northern Tier Route would provide a means of travel that would lower carbon emissions, be energy efficient, reduce traffic congestion, and offer an economical way for people to move across the state (without driving) over longer distances. This is the future, not the past. In our view the logical choice from the output of the study is phased introduction of Alternative 4, Full Local Service. This alternative would provide rail service to a larger number of stations and thus a larger population of people along the corridor. Importantly it would provide a strong basis for renewed economic and housing development in the communities that surround the planned stations. We have a choice, now that the study is complete. We can place the study on a shelf and do nothing, or we can take the necessary steps to move away from our dependence on personal vehicles and follow the lead that has been set in other regions of the country to provide affordable, dependable, and reliable passenger rail service that supports underserved communities of people who outside of the Metro regions. We ask that you consider the following proposed next steps in the final report: Governor Healey and the legislature should designate Fair Share Amendment Funds in the FY2026 State Budget to move this project through the next stage of project planning and development; Governor Healey should articulate the need to restore and expand passenger rail service on the Boston and Albany Corridor (West-East Rail), and the Northern Tier Corridor, with similar effort, focus, funding, and goals; The University of Massachusetts Amherst Center for Economic Development should be engaged to study the economic benefits associated with the restoration of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier Route, between Boston, Greenfield, and North Adams; MassDOT should be directed to engage with the owner and operator of the Pan Am Southern rail corridor to better understand the full scope of the planned improvements to this freight corridor, since improvements to the corridor for freight service will reduce the level of improvements needed for future passenger service; MassDOT should work with the owner and operator of the Pan Am Southern rail corridor to identify improvements along the rail corridor (as example, renewal of railroad-highway crossings and bridge restoration work) that would directly benefit both freight service and any future passenger service that could be accomplished using available federal grants; MassDOT should engage a consultant to better understand the potential ridership that could be generated between restored passenger service on the Northern Tier Corridor and adjacent passenger rail corridors, such as the Valley Flyer and the Vermonter Corridor — in particular for travel between Boston and Vermont/Montreal; MassDOT, working with stakeholders and UMass Amherst, should work to develop a plan to speed up the planning,

development, design and construction required for the restoration and/or improvement of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier Corridor and Boston and Albany Corridor, and the corridors that extend to neighboring states; We applaud the study team for considering electrification as an option for the Northern Tier Corridor. While this may not be feasible in the short to medium term we feel that a long term plan needs to be developed to move away from the operation of diesel powered intercity rail trains in the Commonwealth. Alternative means of propulsion — such as overhead electric power sources and/or hydrogen powered passenger train sets, to name just two options, should be studied on routes where it makes sense. Thank you for the time and effort that MassDOT and the entire study team has put into this multiyear study effort. Submitted by Ben Heckscher, for the Western Mass Rail Coalition

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 4 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 6 includes advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand and evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies as recommended next steps.

Comment 553

Name: John Stepher Sabio

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Green, efficient, and needed.


MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 554

Name: Lucy Kossuth

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

 I would need this train so that I could easily get home during college breaks. This would seriously benefit myself and my community, especially people who live in rural New England such as myself.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 555**Name:** Brandon Joung**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

A passenger rail corridor from North Adams to Boston would be immensely beneficial to those living in Northern Massachusetts, especially in the comparatively remote Berkshire County.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This study aimed to increase connectivity throughout Northern Massachusetts and provide additional mobility options. We appreciate your input.

Comment 556**Name:** Inés Ramirez**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

I really really want a rail to Boston. It would help greatly with my travel since I am from Puerto Rico, it would be more accessible to me to reach my college in Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 557**Name:** Zoltan Makroczi**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

I would love this.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 558**Name:** Maya Sachs

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

I would absolutely love a train to Boston from Williamstown. I am a student at Williams college and I would use it personally at least once a month. Furthermore I am on the debate team and we compete in Boston twice a month. It would be so convenient to have a station so the team of 20 could travel easily.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience. Additional station stops, including Williamstown, may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 559

Name: Talia RJ

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

As someone without much mobility around the state or area, a railroad route to Boston is needed and is an equity issue

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 560

Name: Eleanor Race

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

I think this is an amazing idea and would absolutely help and benefit students not just at Williams, but other colleges across the state!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to give input.

Comment 561

Name: Thomas Green

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Thank you to MassDOT and its study team members for providing this opportunity to comment on the August 13, 2024 DRAFT final report for the Northern Tier (“NTIER”) Passenger Rail Study. I agree with the study’s two primary conclusions – (1) that the NTIER rail line is “a strategic asset for the entire Commonwealth and should be treated as such” and (2) that more work needs to be done “to further develop the markets, ridership, costs and benefits.” (Draft p.15) The draft report’s analysis of alternatives is detailed and helpful and, in my opinion, strongly supports “Alternative 4 – Full Local Service” – as best serving more Route 2 Corridor population centers and thereby generating higher ridership, while keeping end-to-end NTIER passenger travel times below 3 hours from North Adams to North Station (and approximately 2 hours from Greenfield). Accordingly, I urge that the Final Report include a stronger recommendation that “Alternative 4 – Full Local Service” be the focus of future work by MassDOT, its Amtrak partners and the NTIER line’s host railroads. On a related point, refinement of “Alternative 4 – Full Local Service” to eliminate the assumed Gardner stop (given its close proximity to Wachusett) would further reduce both travel times and capital costs and should be considered in future analyses. Since the draft Final Report already emphasizes that further work needs to be done towards the restoration of passenger rail service on the NTIER line, my remaining comments are in the nature of additions to the “Recommended Next Steps” section of the draft:

1. The initiation of access agreement negotiations with host railroads over the NTIER line’s Infrastructure needs should commence immediately and encompass BOTH freight rail improvement projects AND passenger rail restoration investments. The NTIER line’s freight rail service is of crucial importance to the Commonwealth. As the draft Final Report notes, infrastructure improvements along the NTIER line would enhance freight rail service capacity into Boston in a manner that also would directly support better passenger rail schedule options for MassDOT’s West-East Rail project (Draft Study p.106 bullet point 3). I strongly support the draft’s conclusion that MassDOT negotiations need to commence with the host railroads (CSX in the west and the MBTA in the east) to better define the NTIER line’s Infrastructure needs and their cost. It is equally imperative in my view that those negotiations include a plan that identifies both Freight Rail Improvement projects and Passenger Rail Restoration projects needed along the NTIER line. To conduct a negotiation that encompasses only freight rail improvements and not also passenger rail restoration infrastructure needs would be wasteful and inefficient and would do a major disservice to the many communities along the Route 2 corridor that support the return of NTIER passenger rail service to Boston from North Adams, Greenfield and other corridor population centers.
2. A more robust Economic Analysis of NTIER passenger rail restoration should be conducted immediately to comport with both the letter and spirit of the Study’s enabling legislation. The economic benefits analysis contained in the DRAFT Final Report is largely limited to an estimate of construction period economic impacts. This appears to have resulted from MassDOT’s choice to confine the NTIER study’s analysis to economic benefits that USDOT scores in its Benefit Cost Analysis (“BCA”). However, as MassDOT and its project team well know, US DOT BCA analysis explicitly excludes

quantification of what it calls “agglomeration” benefits, meaning, in their own words, the way in which transportation infrastructure investment “that enhances the connections between communities, people and businesses can reshape the economic geography of a region” See USDOT December 2023 BCA Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs” document Section 5.7 (page 25). In contrast, the Commonwealth’s enabling legislation requiring the NTIER study states that the study shall, among other things, include “an analysis of community impact and benefits” and an examination and evaluation of “the resulting economic, employment, social and cultural benefits to Franklin and Berkshire counties and the commonwealth as a whole.” (Outside Section 84, FY 2020 Commonwealth Budget, sub-parts (vi) and (viii)(2019).) Given that these state law requirements for the NTIER study are clearly broader than an analysis hewing to the narrow USDOT BCA “benefits” guidance, I recommend that the NTIER Final Report’s “Recommended Next Steps “ be expanded to include a call for a more robust economic analysis of the restoration of passenger rail service on NTIER. The University of Massachusetts Amherst Center for Economic Development would be an ideal partner to engage in completing such a study. For examples of such studies on intercity passenger rail restoration and expansion projects of comparable length to NTIER in New England, the UMASS center’s analysts need look no further than the MaineDOT studies of the Amtrak “Downeaster” service into North Station. See Maine DOT “Final Report Economic Benefits of Amtrak Downeaster Service” (February 2005) and “Lewiston Auburn Passenger Rail Economic Evaluation Study” (January 2023). 3. The Final Report’s discussion of potential ridership should acknowledge the recent sharp rise in intercity rail ridership on existing Amtrak lines serving Massachusetts as providing a further imperative to the Commonwealth to conduct a more current and broader analysis of NTIER passenger ridership levels. On August 30, 2024, MassDOT released a thoughtful and timely release announcing the recent rapid growth in ridership on existing Amtrak intercity trains serving Massachusetts. Intercity passenger trips have doubled since 2018 and grew an impressive 27% in Fiscal 2024 over Fiscal 2023 trip totals, as the MassDOT release notes. That announcement of course came after the release of the DRAFT Final Report on NTIER dated August 13, 2024. Moreover, much of the data used in the DRAFT report with respect to NTIER ridership estimates is from 2019 Streetlight LBS data sets (see, for example, DRAFT Final Report pgs. 57-62 and related appendices). Prior analyses of that data presumably would not have reflected the population’s sharply increased preferences for train travel demonstrated in the more recent AMTRAK intercity data. As MassDOT proceeds with further analysis, this strong recent trend should be considered, together with work addressing the other limitations of the study that MassDOT already notes in the DRAFT report (such as the need to more precisely define NTIER catchment areas to include Vermont and other non-Massachusetts users of a restored NTIER rail option and to factor in the latent demand from the numerous cultural, educational and eco-tourism institutions and businesses positioned along the route)(DRAFT pg. 110). So, I agree with the DRAFT Final Report that “more granular and current Northern Tier travel data...would be beneficial.” Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on the DRAFT Final Report on NTIER and for the report’s insightful and strong recognition of the fact that the NTIER rail

corridor is a Strategic Asset for the entire Commonwealth and should be treated as such.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 4 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Chapter 6 includes advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand and evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies as recommended next steps.

Comment 562

Name: David Canez

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

This would provide towns folk the possibility to work in Boston while also being able to maintain a family in their hometown. WE NEED THIS!!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time.

Comment 563

Name: Eliana Tetreault

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

The return of this rail will be an immense help. There is a need to broaden public transit in this region and this rail will be the perfect opportunity to bring this equitable change.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 564

Name: Isa Chou

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

The return of rail service to the Berkshires is necessary. It is an equity issue and an environmental issue.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 565

Name: Angie Mejia Sierra

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Accessible public transportation in Western Massachusetts would make travel significantly easier for low-income and middle class people who cannot afford to drive. It would also make it easier for people with disabilities who cannot drive.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 566

Name: Jesse Leavitt

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

I would like to see environmental justice as a priority in bringing this rail to low-income areas, intentionally redistributing jobs in the creation and implementation, and wealth instead of making this rail project exacerbate wealth inequality in the commonwealth (one of the highest ratios in the nation) and end up serving mostly suburban or tourist purposes in the end. I am in favor of spending on the latest technology and taxing the 1 million+ income folks to pay for this benefit to their state. I would also like to see offsets built into approval of the project that account for long-term implications on real-estate, allowing people who already live along the corridor to benefit and preventing speculation by land-hungry interests.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 567**Name:** Luci Schafer**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

Northern Massachusetts needs a rail from East to West to end isolation of western Massachusetts. Even though we are all one state, people in western mass feel a stronger relationship to Albany since it is more accessible.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 568**Name:** Laurie Lambert**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

October 10, 2024 Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler: I write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project. I am the Head of School at Stoneleigh-Burnham School, an independent girls school in Greenfield, MA. Our program includes students in 7th-12th grade. Our boarding and day students come from all over the world, the U.S., and the local area. This year, we have 55 day students. Our signature programs include the International Baccalaureate, riding, speech and debate, and the arts, especially dance. We are one of the largest employers in Franklin County and in Western MA. We have just under 100 employees from the local area. Also, we bring in between 100-130 families and students every year, and the extended rail possibilities would be of huge interest for transportation, especially with our five-day boarding students. In addition, we have many interested families and consultants who visit campus each year, and the enhanced transportation options would be extremely helpful. Our students buy local, and our faculty and staff live in Greenfield or the surrounding towns, and we help support the economy. The Northern Tier Rail Project would enhance our possibilities and add to our community in many ways. The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth. Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older. Many

businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth. As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west. We believe that the expanded travel opportunities will only enhance our school and may even add to our prospective student population. The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options. Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality. Warmest regards, Laurie

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 569

Name: Eric Smith
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

I support the passenger rail alternatives that provide for a train station/ train stop within the Town of Athol. These appear to be Alternative 3 and Alternative 4.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 570

Name: Pete Cooke
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

I want to voice my support for Northern Tier Passenger Rail. Not only will it help people from Western Mass reach Boston easier, but it will encourage people from Boston to visit North County. Please share the resources of this state with Western Mass and help us to grow North County

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 571

Name: Devlin Madden
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

It's time to put a commuter rail in western Massachusetts.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 572

Name: Jonathan Meeks
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

With Williams College in Williamstown it would make sense to terminate there rather than North Adams. It's a little closer for folks in the Bennington area too.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Additional station stops, including Williamstown, may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 573

Name: Irene Yang
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

Having a passenger rail from near Williamstown to Boston would make travel significantly more affordable and easier for me

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 574

Name: Alyssa Bauer

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Western MA desperately needs more rail coverage like there is in Eastern Mass. We need to develop more rail options for cross state transit!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 575

Name: Rafe Wolman

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

I think there should be passenger rail along the route 2/Northern Tier Corridor, making Boston accessible by train to North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner etc. I would use this service to visit family and friends in Boston and for work-related trips. Having a place for bikes would be a big plus.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 576

Name: Michael Elliott

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

October 10, 2024 Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler, On behalf of Amherst College, I am writing to express my strong support for the Northern Tier Rail Project. As one of the nation's leading liberal arts institutions, Amherst College brings students, faculty, staff, and visitors from around the world to

Western Massachusetts to learn, teach, and engage with our campus, town, and region. The College supports over 2,700 direct and indirect jobs and over \$400 million in economic activity; most of our workforce calls the Pioneer Valley home. We also offer three world-class museums—The Emily Dickinson Museum, The Beneski Museum of Natural History, and the Mead Art Museum—which support local educational initiatives and collectively account for tens of thousands of annual visitors to the Town of Amherst. The Northern Tier Rail Project and the multi-modal transportation connections it will support will be a significant step toward fostering a more sustainable and economically vibrant future for Western Massachusetts. The project will enable Amherst College to offer students and faculty a closer connection to the abundant cultural and research resources of Boston and other destinations in our Commonwealth to the east and west of the College; it will facilitate more convenient travel to our region for prospective students, families, and visitors; and it will also significantly enhance the appeal of the Pioneer Valley as a place to live and work for our faculty and staff. We are excited about the transformational cultural and economic impacts that improved transportation links across the Commonwealth will have on the Town of Amherst and area communities. I also want to underscore the meaningful climate impact of this project. Amherst College has made a College-wide commitment to environmental sustainability and addressing climate change, with a goal of achieving carbon neutrality as an institution by 2030. At the same time, transportation and faculty, student, and staff travel remain a significant source of institutional carbon production. In providing a more sustainable option for travel throughout the region, the Northern Tier project will mitigate one of the most intractable climate challenges we face as a Commonwealth and a nation as we look to our collective future. Amherst College is proud to stand alongside our fellow institutions, community partners, and neighbors in supporting the Northern Tier Rail Project. I am grateful for your consideration and leadership, and I look forward to following the project closely in the coming months.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

Comment 577

Name: Sam Bentley

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Please extend the rail service.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 578

Name: D Aramini
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

Having attending college in the NW corner (without a car!), it would have been wonderful to have a good option to travel eastward. It would also be a great way for folks from Boston to enjoy North Adams, Clarksburg, & Williamstown.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 579

Name: Bruce Ridge
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

This would be hugely supportive to our family. My parents are elderly and afraid to drive the distance from Boston to greenfield—my father had a recent stroke that impacted his ability to drive long distances and my mother has bad eye sight. A rail option would allow them to visit us and their grandbabies without the intense experience of traffic in 95.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This study aimed to identify alternatives that could increase mobility options and connectivity. Thank you for taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 580

Name: Matthew Baj Jr.
Date: 10/10/2024
Comment:

Don't bother. It wasn't so long ago that service to Gardner died because of lack of patronage. In my opinion there just aren't enough potential riders unless its just someone wanting to make a day trip to Boston or such.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 581**Name:** Martha Cohen**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

This plan would lessen traffic on Rt 2 west, make it easier for students to travel out to school (UMass Amherst, Smith, etc), make it easier for family to visit back and forth.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Comment 582**Name:** Liz Brown**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

Please consider and encourage a passenger rail train in North Western Massachusetts. The taxpayers deserve it, the area can use and see development and growth.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 583**Name:** Lewis Schrock**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

Williams college student. I would use. Please make it

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 584**Name:** Alexandra Fletcher**Date:** 10/10/2024**Comment:**

Hello! I wanted to voice my wholehearted support for this new rail line that would serve western MA. It would be very beneficial to many different people in the area, including myself. It would enable me to have a safe and reliable way to get to Boston when necessary as well as opening up many tourist opportunities!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The study aimed to develop alternatives that could increase mobility and support economic development. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 585

Name: Dan Peacock

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Final Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Draft Final Report, August 13, 2024 Comments by Dan Peacock, Medway, MA 02053, formerly Surry, NH 03431 October 10, 2024 1 I support the October 1, 2024, “Comments on the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Draft Final Report” of the Western Mass Rail Coalition. 2 I will expand on comments that the Western Mass Rail Coalition made on Pages 4 and 5, Page 6, Figure 1.2, Service Characteristics. The Coalition rightly made the points that: This table indicates that the “coverage area” for the study is “limited to Massachusetts vs. extending into Vermont and New York.” This wording appears to indicate that ridership estimates in the draft report are limited to riders with the catchment areas as defined within the study document, and the report has not considered the possibility of intercity rail riders who might connect in Greenfield with the proposed Northern Tier Service. SUGGESTION: Include riders potentially traveling between Boston, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Montreal as this corridor will be very popular for these reasons: • Population and Train Ridership, A Direct Relationship Montreal is the second most populous city in Canada (1.8 million) and 9th largest city in North American. Greater Montreal has a population of 4.1 million. Boston, MA, is the most populous city in Massachusetts (0.67 million) and the third most populous city in Northeast United States after Philadelphia and New York City. Greater Boston also had a population of 4.9 million in 2023. • Rail-Centric Metro Areas Both Boston and Montreal have excellent commuter rail systems so a large portion of their populations will have already taken trains and will be open to using a new train route between their metropolitan centers. • Historic Passenger Rail Travel between Montreal and Boston Prior to cessation of passenger rail travel between Montreal and Boston, there were several routes that riders could travel between Montreal and Boston: 1. via White River Junction, VT, 2. via Bellows Falls, VT, 3. via Greenfield, MA, and 4. Springfield, MA. Only the Greenfield and Springfield routes are possible today, and the Greenfield route is much closer. • Vermont’s Commitment to Vermonter Extension to Montreal In Vermonter’s last Rail Plan of 2021, they declared that the extension of the Vermonter from St Albans to Montreal was their Number 1 Priority, which ensures the greatest likelihood of

success and a new stream of riders between Montreal and Boston. • Montreal-Greenfield-Boston Corridor, a Route of Great Historic, Travel, Educational and Natural History Interest This route is bound to generate excellent rider numbers because of its historic, travel, educational, and natural interests: for example, Montreal, towns along the Connecticut River, Fitchburg, Concord, Lexington, multiple colleges and universities, skiing, hiking, and historic buildings and literary icons. • Massachusetts and Vermont Rail Infrastructure Upgrades Massachusetts and Vermont have or are investing in rail infrastructure and related transit-oriented development. 1) In 2016 Greenfield became the first “net zero” transportation center in the country. 2) In 2024, Brattleboro broke ground for Vermont’s first station with a completely level platform and Brattleboro’s first new passenger rail station in 111 years (1915-2026). 3) In 2024, Vermont and New Hampshire will complete work on a \$60 million bridge across the Connecticut River that will improve transportation access to the new Brattleboro Station and allow the old bridge to be used as a much safer bike option to the Brattleboro Station. 4) In Late 2024 or 2025, the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center (BMAC), which is the location of the 1915 historic station and current Amtrak station, the former baggage room of the historic station. should launch a \$20-30 million expansion that will be a big draw from VT, MA, NH, and many other locations accessible by train. 5) In 2023, Vermont began a remodeling of its Essex Junction Station, which is the state’s second busiest. 6) In 2024, the Town of Rockingham will complete its purchase of the historic Bellows Falls, VT Station. The Town will rehabilitate the outside and inside of the station and install a commercial business there.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. As noted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, each alternative consisted of a combination of infrastructure and service characteristics including stations, coverage area, service structure, frequency of service, span of service, travel time between stations, and physical improvements, with the referenced figure outlining the range of potential options for consideration as part of the alternatives development. Regarding station catchment areas, please see Chapter 4 for additional information on these locations and the estimated ridership ranges. Chapter 6 includes advancing planning efforts at the intersection of economic development needs and opportunities and serving travel demand as a recommended next step.

Comment 586

Name: Jacob Hertz

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

Please improve transit throughout northern Massachusetts

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 587

Name: Jaskaran Singh

Date: 10/10/2024

Comment:

we need this especially for students at williams college needing easy access to boston

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 588

Name: Emily Salinas Romero

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please implement this train rail! This could open up so many opportunities for western mass.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 589

Name: Sarah Smith

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I want to go home! I go to college in the berkshires, and I would really appreciate an affordable way to get home to boston from here.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate you taking the time to share your lived experience. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 590

Name: Maryam Dar

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please implement this train route! It would enable so much more economic activity in the Berkshires as well as a much easier commute for people who attend schools there. Also, adding more public transport to our state can only be a positive thing—children whose families can't afford cars can still experience the world-class hiking and cultural institutions (e.g. Clark Art Museum, Mass MoCA) that western Massachusetts has to offer if this passenger rail route were to be implemented. As a Massachusetts resident since birth, I strongly implore you to support the addition of this route to the strongest extent possible!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Goals of the study included supporting economic development and promoting transportation equity. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 591

Name: Grace Irish

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would like to voice my support of the return of the passenger rail service to Williamstown and North Adams.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Additional station stops, including Williamstown, may be evaluated as part of any future project development. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 592

Name: Rachel Silverman

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I support a railroad along the route 2 corridor!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 593

Name: Marc Wolman

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please rejuvenate this neglected transportation corridor and lifeline through a scenic rich historic diverse swath of Massachusetts. I frequently drive between the Boston area and Greenfield, and would prefer to ride!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 594

Name: Seth Turnbaugh

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I prefer any option that restarts services to towns directly affected by these trains. For example, Gardner, Athol and Orange would be prime candidates to have train stations in or near the downtowns as the train already passes through. This could help reconnect these once thriving towns to Mass transit and help revitalize more towns and potentially offer more access to residential options for people who work in Boston but are being priced out of residential options closer to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 595

Name: Karishma Santebennur

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please give passenger rail to Boston. Thank you! Much love!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 596

Name: Tricia Simmons

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

East-west rail would be amazing. I work remotely, but my office is in the Boston area, and I have to go in to the office at least once or more each month. I would use a train for sure, over driving in, or driving to Worcester to get the train in from there. There are many co workers out here as well, and I know we would all use it. Also, the ability to easily reach Boston area for all the attractions and activities out there would be another big plus

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 597

Name: David Knavel

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

As my partner and I grow older it becomes more difficult to drive to Boston. Rail from Greenfield to Boston would restore our freedom to travel. Please make this happen.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 598

Name: Patrick Brannan

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I completely endorse the idea of the northern tier rail expansion. Travel from Northern Berkshire to Boston would be a great benefit to the region economically, as well as socially by reducing isolation of those without adequate transport.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 599

Name: Mike Luchock

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

This would be great and beneficial to all of community in Athol and surrounding areas . I wish it were done earlier people need more public transportation.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 600

Name: Montachusett MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

October 7, 2024 TO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation RE: Montachusett MPO Comment on Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study To Whom it May Concern: Please accept this official comment prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), staff to the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO). First and foremost, the MMPO would like to express sincere gratitude for the substantial and meaningful work done on the Northern Tier Rail Study, helping to build the foundation in our Region and in our Commonwealth for equitable transportation access, economic development and access, modal shift, and climate change mitigation. Of the six passenger rail corridor development scenarios outlined in the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study¹, Alternative 3, Electrified Passenger Rail Service from North Adams to Boston with stops in Athol, Fitchburg, and Ayer shows the greatest benefit to the Montachusett region and the best long-term return on investment, overall, for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This forward-looking investment in clean transportation intersects with our Regional Transportation Plan and our greenhouse gas and environmental harm reduction goals. It provides economic and transportation equity and access for our communities, particularly the environmental justice populations along the Northern Tier Rail corridor. Electrified Passenger Rail Service is consistent with low carbon travel principles which serve community eco-tourism economic development goals² that seek to benefit from, sustain, and preserve the Montachusett region's natural resources and rural character. Electrified Passenger Rail Service will also help promote, secure, and improve accessibility to the burgeoning green economy in the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone³ in the Montachusett region where billions of dollars in economic activity are generated and where cutting-edge green development, net-zero-energy housing,⁴ and thousands of jobs in ground-breaking technologies, including renewable energy technologies,^{5,6} are laying the foundation for a resilient future. It is fitting that our region be served by clean, modern, efficient, and accessible electrified passenger rail service. In comparing Alternative 3 to the other five Alternatives presented in the Study, Alternative 3 is shown to be most

advantageous in almost all key service impact projections (from the Study):

- The highest Estimated Annual Ridership
- The lowest Operating and Maintenance Cost Per Rider
- The highest Transportation Cost Savings Per Rider in both the Low and High Ridership scenarios.
- The greatest reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled in both Low and High Ridership scenarios.
- The greatest positive Economic Impacts from Construction.
- The greatest Peak Employment/Number of Jobs, direct, indirect, and induced.

Further, the scope of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is not able to fully capture costs specific to diesel service alternatives when contrasted with electrified service, including:

- The impact of diesel engine versus quieter electric engine service in noise decibel levels and vibration on home and business values and quality of life for populations along the railway
- The impact and costs associated with fine particulate matter, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), and other diesel exhaust byproducts on environmental and human health, particularly for the environmental justice populations clustered along the railway who suffer disproportionately from asthma and cardiopulmonary disease
- The impact and costs in lost construction efficiencies, service disruption, and delayed health and environmental benefits by building, as an interim solution, a diesel/fossil fuel dependent passenger rail system that should, subsequently, be retrofitted to an electrified/renewable energy system as the state strives to meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations will result in substantial and unnecessary future burden to the Commonwealth and the communities being served.

Alternative 3, Electrified Service, makes substantial progress addressing five (5) of the seven (7) goals and objectives outlined the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization Regional Transportation Plan, Journey to 20507:

- Reduce congestion and improve mobility. (Goal 2)
- Promote the development of improvements and options across all modes for areas that serve Title VI and Environmental Justice populations. (Goal 3)
- Improve economic vitality by promoting transit and commuter rail options and improving access to job clusters and employment centers and economic development priority areas. (Goal 5)
- Promote and encourage a shift from single occupant vehicles to transit. (Goal 6)
- Reduce Greenhouse Gases and promote sustainable environmental practices. (Goal 7)

Finally, it is MMPO's position that Gardner should be added as a train stop in Alternative 3 and any other scenarios without replacing stops already included in those scenarios (North Station, Porter Square, Ayer, Fitchburg, Athol, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield and North Adams):

- Of the communities west of Fitchburg in the Northern Tier Rail study, the City of Gardner has the highest population, 21,000.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of Gardner's population lives in Environmental Justice Census Block Groups.

Geographically, Gardner is located at the mid-point between Fitchburg and Athol, stops included in Alternative 3.

- Gardner has institutions that are a significant population draw for jobs and services, notably Heywood hospital and Mount Wachusett Community College, both with proximity to the North Central Pathway which supports multimodal transit options.
- Gardner serves as an important public transit transfer hub for rural communities north, south, and west of Gardner.

The MMPO would also like to recognize the complex challenges to funding and constructing passenger rail service on the Northern Tier, as detailed in the study. The "Recommended Next Steps" identified in the study will be important in working toward achieving this service. MMPO would like to stress

the importance of including a timeline for these “Recommended Next Steps”. A well-structured timeline is essential for successful planning, execution, and completion, ensuring that goals will be met, and value will be delivered to our communities. MMPO asks to be kept apprised of any timeline development. Again, thank you for all the work done on the Northern Tier Rail Study. MMPO looks forward to active and ongoing participation in this important work. Sincerely, Glenn Eaton, Executive Director Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your support for Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 601

Name: William Johnson

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

This would be amazing for western mass to the Boston area. This will be great!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 602

Name: Julie Williamson

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

This project would be a lifeline for western Massachusetts. We have a declining population while the eastern part of the state is experiencing the opposite. North Adams especially has a lot of attractive redevelopment projects on the horizon and incorporating passenger rail into that future vision could completely revitalize this old mill town. Please support this project.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 603

Name: Emilee Reynolds

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would 100% use this service. I hate driving back east to visit family. I'd use this to visit friends in the city as well as take it into the city and then hop on the commuter rail to visit my family in the suburbs. I'd probably visit Boston more for day trips if this was an option. Right now I only go once a year when I'm already in the area visiting family.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience about traveling to Boston. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 604

Name: John Barrett

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

As the former Mayor of North Adams and now the State Representative from the First Berkshire District, I have been an ardent supporter of passenger rail service between North Adams and Boston for over forty years. The return of passenger rail service as proposed within the Northern Tier plan will be a game changer for Northern Berkshire County. The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study draft final report concludes by stating "Given the estimated benefits and costs associated with each of the six alternatives, the benefit-cost analysis indicates that the benefits may not offset the capital costs required for implementation", which I believe to be problematic. The aforementioned benefit-cost analysis conducted by the study team was done on a preliminary basis, seemingly only to satisfy a requirement for federal funding applications. While quantitative figures like the results of a benefit-cost analysis can help assess a project's feasibility, this methodology cannot account for numerous other factors in the case of Northern Tier Passenger Rail. Regional Public Transit Options The draft report highlights the minimal public transportation service options available to residents of Northern Berkshire County, with only Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) providing bus service from Southern Berkshire to Northern Berkshire comprising 31 cities and towns. Presently, there is no public transportation service to the east between North Adams and Charlemont, creating a disconnect for those who don't have vehicles. This becomes increasingly concerning, as the draft report notes a lack of vehicle ownership in communities along the Route 2 Corridor, including the City of North Adams. Northern Berkshire County is home to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) and Williams College. Many students residing on campus lack access to vehicles, and the absence of public transportation beyond BRTA's coverage area leaves them feeling stranded in the western part of the state.

Did the estimated ridership numbers provided in the draft report consider this demographic? Northern Tier Passenger Rail service would offer more travel options for Northern Berkshire residents and college students who lack access to transportation services, such as the MBTA in the eastern part of the state. The claim that the benefits might not outweigh the costs is detrimental to the possibility of the Northern Tier being included as part of the Compass Rail, further limiting the already dismal transportation options available to residents of the Northern Berkshires. Economy, Jobs, and Population Size The draft report states that the most western segment of the Northern Tier is expected to experience population decline, while the central and eastern segments are expected to see population growth. Additionally, only 22% of the population in the West is made up of working-age residents, with a higher proportion of older workers aged 45 to 64 at 30%. The draft report also notes that about two-thirds of the jobs in Massachusetts are not in the Northern Tier corridor and that the western segment may see the economy, at least in terms of number of jobs, diminish at an accelerating pace over the next twenty years. With most of the population, jobs, and younger workers located in the eastern part of the state where the cost of living is significantly higher and the housing stock is declining, why wouldn't people start to move west? Northern Tier Passenger Rail service would allow people to move to the western part of the state while preserving the ability to work in the central or eastern segments, especially considering the increasing number of hybrid work opportunities. If the implementation of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier has the potential to jumpstart the economy, increase the total number of jobs, and spur population growth in the western part of the state, this is an opportunity that cannot be missed. Conclusion The determination that the benefits of Northern Tier Passenger Rail service might not outweigh the costs seems to be based solely on the benefit-cost analysis ratio criteria used for federal funding applications. Why is the feasibility of this project reliant on these criteria when other funding sources can be sought out? If federal funds are deemed necessary, what could be changed in the project to make the benefits outweigh the costs? In Western Massachusetts, specifically in Northern Berkshire County, passenger rail service is not a luxury; it is a necessity for future growth. The western region of the state is consistently overlooked in many state-level initiatives due to its small population size, and it should not be neglected once again.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study, Representative. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. Chapter 6 includes evaluating alternative phasing or implementation strategies as a recommended next step.

Comment 605

Name: Peter Wilson

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA) is a statewide coalition dedicated to creating just and equitable transportation so that every community can flourish. Our coalition includes community groups, disability and transit advocates, housing and community development organizations, and others. We believe that increased intercity rail across the Commonwealth is important to increase opportunities for prosperity for all residents statewide. Reliable, affordable, clean, and sustainable rail service that the Northern Tier could offer would help meet our climate goals, provide access to jobs and opportunities, and create a more cohesive, connected community for Massachusetts residents. The Northern Tier MassDOT study provides many alternatives to provide rail service for this corridor. T4MA supports options that will meet the following criteria: Route options are faster and more convenient than driving The design and construction of the corridor provide the most economic benefits as well as providing options for future expansions The line is fully electrified to help meet the Commonwealth's climate goals and use the best technology available To meet all of the criteria above, T4MA supports Alternative 3, which would build out an electrified network to North Adams, has the shortest travel times, and provide the most economic benefits. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Commonwealth. We need to move to electric vehicles, including our intercity rail, to help reduce emissions and improve air quality. Diesel locomotives are outdated and will become obsolete before the investment is paid off if we don't follow other countries in train electrification. We encourage MassDOT to look beyond these alternatives for electrification to adopt some of the more recent technologies available around the world. Alternative 3 estimates travel times between North Adams and Boston to be 2 hours 50 minutes. According to Google Maps, driving from North Adams to Boston takes 3 hours 8 minutes. While Alternative 3 is faster than driving, T4MA encourages MassDOT to think bigger and broader about rail speeds in the future. For instance, according to the 1954 Boston Maine Railroad Schedule, trains traveling from North Adams to Boston, on the express route, would take 3 hours 10 minutes. 70 years later MassDOT is proposing restoring passenger rail service that is only 20 minutes faster using route options that are not higher speed to reduce travel times and incentivize using the rail service. For residents to choose transit over driving it needs to be more affordable, faster, and convenient. T4MA encourages MassDOT to think broader for the Northern Tier and all intercity rail service. For example, Manchester to London England is approximately 200 miles, driving takes more than 4 hours while train travel times are about 2 hours 30 minutes. In France, train travel between Paris and Lyon, a distance of 300 miles, takes 1 hour 52 minutes and driving is estimated at over 5 hours. These are clearly choices to prioritize clean transit service more than driving and Massachusetts needs to be a leader in this kind of transportation. While we understand that these examples include larger cities than the Northern Tier proposes to connect, let's not build infrastructure that will be obsolete if we have opportunities to expand our intercity rail network beyond our state lines. T4MA supports a holistic approach to intercity rail to allow for expansion of service for both frequency and service area. For instance, construction for the Northern Tier

should allow for expansion to Amherst and Northampton, a large population center of students during the school year, and connecting service to the Berkshire Flyer and Amtrak Vermonter. T4MA also encourages MassDOT to keep fares affordable to allow for rail service to benefit all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of income. For the Northern Tier to be successful, it needs to make financial and logistical sense to attract and sustain ridership. Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment on this study.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 606

Name: Susan Conger

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

My spouse and I enthusiastically support the westward extension of passenger rail along the Northern Tier. It would make it possible for us to accomplish travel that we currently either do by car or avoid altogether: day trips to Boston for sight-seeing or medical appointments; connecting to Logan Airport; connecting to rail travel north to Maine. We live in Greenfield and thanks to the Amtrak Vermonter and the Valley Flyer we have made multiple trips by train to Washington DC, finding it far more enjoyable and less stressful than making the same trip by car or by air. We would like to have the same easy access to Boston, which although much closer to us is ironically much harder to reach via public transit.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 607

Name: James Mussoni

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Yesterday picked up my friend at the Wachusett terminal of the Fitchburg line. He is handicapped and relies on public transportation. We went to visit his family that lives in Orange..I had to travel from Montague to Wachusett to pick him up at the station. We then had to travel by car to Orange. At the end of his trip, we had to go back to Wachusett, and then I had to travel back to Montague. See where I'm going here? A lot of unnecessary travel

in Rt 2 that the Northern Tier would solve.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 608

Name: Timothy Downs

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Looks like a great route definitely concerned about service availability. I feel as if this can be an incredible tool if there is enough trains running daily. Imagine the benefit for accessibility to outdoors from eastern mass and access to amenities for western mass. This will only work if theres a minimum of 4 trains daily

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. All alternatives modeled included an evaluation of 5 trains per day. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 609

Name: Ryan Brown

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would greatly like to see passenger rail connecting the northern towns of Massachusetts to Boston. This is a service I would personally ride often, as would friends and family.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 610

Name: Robert Dobias

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Rail would be good, but it is not self supporting (see MBTA). The Commonwealth's economy and tax burden can't support another subsidized program, especially when the call goes out to use electric. Money should be used to improve the business climate in Western/Central/South Coast & Merrimack Valley. Relieve the congestion & housing

affordability inside 128.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 611

Name: John Anhalt

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I support Northern Tier Rail, especially options 2-4. I believe option 2 is the best overall at this time unless there are enough green incentives to make the 2x capital costs for option 3 preferential. If option 4 is pursued then the Shelburne Falls station should be dropped...it is only 11 miles / 19 min drive from Greenfield with existing regional bus connections that could be invested in to better connect Greenfield to the West (Shelburne Falls and Berkshire East resort) and South (Old Deerfield, Tree House Brewing, and Yankee Candle Village).

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 612

Name: Annie Leavitt

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would frequently take a passenger rail along the Rt 2 Corridor! I think that MA as a whole is losing out on the collaborative possibilities of folks across the state by not having a rail system to make that kind of commute possible.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. MassDOT continues to coordinate with our partners on increasing mobility, connectivity, and access. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 613

Name: Colin M. Ovisky

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Our region would benefit significantly from passenger rail service between northern Berkshire County and the Boston area!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 614

Name: Brian McNeil

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would love to have a train that goes from North Adams to Boston. Right now the only way to get to Boston is by Greyhound or Amtrak. It would be nice to have a train leave North Adams early in the morning and arrive in Boston spend the day and then take the last train home.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 615

Name: Jenny Swoap

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

The northern tier rail would connect communities and create economic development in the region. I would love to be able to use rail to visit my children in Boston. Plus my youngest goes to Smith. How great it would be for her to have a rail option to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 616

Name: Emily Rusnak

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Any rail in the state is good for Massachusetts residents, reducing the use of expensive roadways in favor of other long-distance transport modalities. My husband was born in Mass and we travel to the state and other parts of the region regularly from the Midwest.

Currently we have to disembark where there is "last mile" transport infrastructure so we can visit places in the state that are not accessible by rail. Having better options on the northern corridor of the state for transport allows more travelers to visit these communities, bolstering economic benefits to these communities. One important factor to consider is the ways in which this route articulates with other routes in the region. One of the downfalls of the Vermonter route via Amtrak is it does not articulate well with the E-W corridor (Lake Shore Limited) between Chicago and Boston. If you want access to the Vermonter corridor, you are typically forced to have an overnight stay one direction. With a bit of advanced planning, you could integrate this northern tier into the LSL, Valley Flyer, and Berkshire Flyer routes, increasing frequency and density to create a web of access in the region vs. sporadic connections that are ill-timed. I'm certain ridership would increase across these routes if there was better connectivity on the edges of the NEC. Short of these train-based connections, investing in Ambus or similar local bus infrastructure could make these connections a reality, getting more visitors to smaller western and central Mass communities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. MassDOT continues to coordinate with our partners on increasing mobility, connectivity, and access. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 617

Name: Virginia Grant
Date: 10/11/2024
Comment:

I am really interested and excited about this I travel to Boston at least 8 times a month and as of right now I have to travel to Fitchburg or drive all the way into the city so having this happen would be amazing I live in North Adams

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 618

Name: Shawn Enos
Date: 10/11/2024
Comment:

This would be awesome for North Adams and Berkshire County

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your input.

Comment 619

Name: Sarah Vallieres

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is important for the economic vitality of North Adams. Please start this project in North Adams connecting to Boston. This will improve the economy and access to jobs in an area that needs it most. The ability to travel to Boston in under 3 hours will benefit many people, including me. If I can take the train from North Adams and not drive, this will help decrease traffic congestion and increase my trips into Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 620

Name: Donna Kaiser

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

What with more people working hybrid schedules after the Pandemic, I think this could be a game-changer for Western Mass, where we are losing population and need families with children to replenish our schools. Commuting to a Boston-area office a few times a week and working from home could be very appealing to people who are tired of Eastern counties' house prices. I really hope we can find a way to use the electrified option. I will certainly be using this service when it's up and running.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 621

Name: Chris Hennessey

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please bring the train to north adams

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 622

Name: Alex Martone

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

WE NEED PASSENGER RAIL! ITS AN EQUITY ISSUE

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 623

Name: Josephine Gollin

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I think that rail service to northwestern MA would really boost the economy of the region and would also be a step towards sustainable public transportation in the state

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 624

Name: Anne Skinner

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please move this project forward. It is a straightforward way to help Northern Tier communities prosper and to take pressure off of communities nearer Boston. We need to encourage public transportation in any way possible.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 625

Name: Ezra Holzapfel

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I am a student from Northern Berkshire county who goes to school in Boston. It's currently difficult to get to school and back because I don't have a car. In the past I've used the bus service, but it's often hard to find seats—especially during holidays. Improved rail service in the Northern Tier would give me and my family more flexibility when traveling to/from home.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 626

Name: Christopher Fowler

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I would LOVE to see train service come back to this area. Hasn't been here since the late 50's. It would stimulate our economy and provide a better transportation option to get to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 627

Name: Madeline Birknes

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Please revive the passenger from Western Mass to Boston!! I would use this service on school breaks and weekends, and it would be amazing to be connected with public

transport to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 628

Name: Lidia Iwasiwka

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Travel to Boston for Medical care is a necessity. Driving there is extremely difficult especially if you are older or under current treatment. Having a train option would alleviate the stress & burden of highway travel, Boston traffic, parking, etc. as the trains can take you within a few blocks of Brigham Young.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experience.

Comment 629

Name: Thomas Huckans

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I am so excited to see the Northern Tier Railroad Restoration gain traction! Bringing back passenger rail to connect North Mass would be such a boon, especially to my beleaguered Berkshire county. It would help the environment, connect us better to our state capital, and also bring investment back to the only county to report population decline in Massachusetts! However, I must note several important factors that are underrepresented in this study. First of all, the project fails to capture more than the economic growth just created by the rail's restoration. Having a restored passenger rail line will bring massive economic stimulus to Western Mass, provide people with greater flexibility in choosing where to live due to easier commutes, and also relieve the serious housing crisis in the Boston area. The economic dividends, especially for such an extraordinarily cheap rail project (comparatively, per mile covered), are staggering. Secondly, in calculating Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), this study does not take into account that many people in northern Berkshire and Franklin counties take the Mass Turnpike (I-90) rather than Route 2. The study uses Route 2, which has fewer miles traveled than I-90, but the reality is that with the frequent congestion and perilous turns of Route 2, many inhabitants of Northwestern Mass will opt for I-90. Not only that, Google maps will suggest taking I-90 for people even in Greenfield! Third, although the impacts of carbon emission are noted in this study, the

current model used fails to take into account that every year, the impacts of continuing carbon emissions will become worse. It is absolutely essential that we reduce emissions as early as possible, which restoring the Northern Tier Railroad will accomplish. Finally, it must be noted that to make this project even easier to undertake, it can be staged! The freight company that owns the track is expected to make certain necessary upgrades already, and then other infrastructure to support passenger service can be slowly phased in. In fact, an operational phase could be developed for less than 500 million dollars.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier and minimizing impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. As noted in Chapter 3, travel patterns were assessed along the corridor and identified the routes for travel, including I-90. In addition, Chapter 6 outlines recommendations for next steps, including potential short-term efforts.

Comment 630

Name: Reina Dastous

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I think it would be great to have a passenger rail along route 2.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 631

Name: Mitchell McCue

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

Bringing passenger rail to North Adams will not only benefit North Adams, it will benefit the entire northern Berkshire and southwest Vermont region by connecting it to Boston. Currently it is a 3 hour plus drive between Boston and North Adams, which discourages people from coming here and is holding back the local economy. Boston area people will be more inclined to visit this region, spurring economic growth and people from here will be able to better access Boston's many attractions and amenities. Southern Berkshire has long benefited from the Mass Pike connecting it with Boston, but our region lacks a quick transportation option to Boston. Regular rail service is a must for this to work, especially westbound trains on Fridays and eastbound on Sunday so weekenders can make the North

Adams region a destination.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of this study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your input.

Comment 632

Name: Donna Haskins

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

This would be so helpful for those who host people flying into Logan but it takes 3 hours just to get to Logan to pick them up much less the 3 hours it takes to come back. A rail option would make it so much easier.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 633

Name: Jensen Simmons

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

It would be amazing to have a train line connecting Boston to the upper part of Western Mass and I would definitely take advantage of it as much as I can, no matter which alternative comes to fruition. I personally support alternative 4 (full local service) and alternative 5 (Albany extension). I go into the Boston area often for shows and for work quite often, so it would make it much easier to get there directly from my own city, rather than having to drive 1.5 hours to Worcester or Fitchburg to catch the commuter rail. I think that it would help reduce traffic and therefore emissions from cars. It would be great too for those in Vermont/anyone taking the Vermonter to be able to connect to the northern tier corridor railway to be able to make their way to Boston with a transfer at Greenfield station. I am completely in support of the northern tier railway and I hope it will be created!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 4 and Alternative 5, and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 634

Name: Kayla Soloman-Lane

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

This would be incredibly useful and life-changing for us folks out in the Berkshires!! Please please do this! I have three small children, and going to Boston in a car is a LOT. Being able to just hop on the train would be fabulous, and we would go back east more often!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 635

Name: Pat Larson

Date: 10/11/2024

Comment:

I think that having a train go along the Northern Tier is a good idea. We need to have more public transportation that people will use so we have fewer cars on the road. This will also be an economic boost for the state.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 636

Name: Sandra Sorel

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

It would be a great asset to North Adams. Driving the outdated Mass Pike is not enjoyable or efficient due to the amount of traffic. Tourism would increase on both ends.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. This study aimed to develop alternatives that support economic development. We appreciate your input.

Comment 637

Name: Seth Langlois

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This would be absolutely incredible!!! Giving people options on travel would lower emissions and traffic. It would also give ppl another option when the roads are icy/snowy so they could still make it to work. Real first world countries have working public transit. We live in capitalist hell at least give us an easy way to get to our slave wage jobs

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment 638

Name: Susanne Robertson

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This is desperately needed. Those who need transportation for medical treatment and other professional services would really benefit as well as cultural connection.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 639

Name: Kevin Mooney

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I live in Petersham and would love to take a train not only into Boston but also to North Adams for the museums!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. The alternatives developed in this study aim to support increased connectivity along the Northern Tier corridor. We appreciate your input.

Comment 640

Name: Noelle Dravis

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This seems awesome and super cool because not everyone has cars or wants to drive across the state and trains are so cool! I would definitely use this if it comes to fruition, especially if it also goes to Albany!!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 641

Name: Matthew Ziemke

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project. I believe that building out a passenger rail service along this corridor would be a significant boon to the region, providing numerous benefits to residents, businesses, and the environment. One of the key factors in the success of this project will be ensuring adequate stops along the new rail line. By serving a wider community, we can maximize the project's potential to:

- * Stimulate economic growth: Increased accessibility will attract businesses, tourists, and residents, leading to job creation and economic development.
- * Improve quality of life: Rail service offers a convenient and sustainable transportation option, reducing reliance on cars and improving air quality.
- * Strengthen regional connectivity: By connecting communities along the route, we can foster stronger ties and promote collaboration.

I urge you to support the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project and advocate for a rail line that includes sufficient stops to serve a diverse population. By doing so, we can create a more vibrant, sustainable, and connected region for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Matthew Ziemke Orange, MA

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 642

Name: Maria Diamond

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I totally support bringing passenger rail service to Northern Berkshire for a variety of reasons including the fact that it will allow families to live here while working/commuting to the eastern part of the state. 3

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 643

Name: Gail LaGoy

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

It is long overdue to have a direct connection from Greenfield to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 644

Name: Andrew Fitch

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Hello! I firmly believe that this project would revitalize the entirety of the route 2 corridor, which has struggled since the previous passenger rail stopped and the factories closed. Please let me know what I can do to advocate for this project. I am your person in North Adams to help push for this.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 645

Name: Hannah Evon

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This is wonderful! It would offer transportation to those who would not otherwise be able to go to either side of the state. I'm all for it!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 646

Name: Andrew Fitch

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I firmly believe this project would help revitalize the entirety of the route 2 corridor, which has struggled since the previous passenger rail stopped and the factories closed. Please count me in as a North Adams advocate for this project and let me know if there is anything I can do to help. We need this connection to Boston and the rest of the state!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 647

Name: Zachariah DeGiulio

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I am very excited for the possibility of this project!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 648

Name: Thomas reynolds

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I would like to see full local service instituted as described in Alternative 4. I believe that the Gardner area would benefit dramatically economically and that the decline in the region could potentially be reversed. Also, the alternative 4 shows that economically that, while being the most expensive option to construct, it would still serve the most people. I have driven between Templeton and Cambridge twice per week for the past 25 years for employment. Obviously, a plan of express service with less station stops would enhance reduced travel times between the two extremes...North Adams and Boston, but I think that a hybrid plan that also offers full local service and reduced express service could co-exist. I also do a fair amount of driving between Templeton and Albany, NY where I often take Amtrak service further west to Chicago.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 649

Name: David Rhenow

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This would be an extremely wasteful use of taxpayer funds. The only real result would be a higher cost of living in Western Massachusetts, if people decide to live here and commute. If this will supposedly bring tourists from Boston, how will they get around from the train station with no car? I would love to hop on a train to Boston but it's realistically not worth it. I can drive to Alewife or Riverside station, park and take the T. This would never pay for itself in a hundred years. Ticket sales would probably never even cover operating expenses. A fraction of the money would be far better spent on road improvements like dedicated bus lanes.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 650

Name: Carolyn Bloniasz

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Moved to the No Berkshire area from Metro West 23 years ago and frequently make the trip into the Boston area for many reasons. As crazy as it may seem, I actually commuted to Metro West for 10 years after the move. On a serious note, many people in No Berkshire County have a disconnect to Boston and feel more connected to Albany. It's no wonder since FAA rules put us outside the Boston market, providing mostly Albany based TV outlets. Our young people could take a trip into "town" and learn its history, there would be less fear of taking that trip to a specialist at Mass Eye and Ear, MGH, Dana Farber or Children's Hospital. I personally use Logan for travel and take the 2.5 hour drive to a Logan Express outside the city and this could take the burden off that long often weather compromised drive. I love Berkshire County but also love Boston and its suburbs. Please reconnect us to the coast.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 651

Name: Barbara Wilson

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

This project would be a great benefit to North Adams and surrounding communities. The many benefits it would open up to our area, would greatly improve our economy and overall access to healthcare, commerce, employment, etc. would have a favorable impact on our area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 652

Name: Clay Oshiro-Leavitt

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

It is exciting to see this project moving forward with some viable alternatives identified. Whatever alternative is selected, there should be an emphasis on service frequency - as is often repeated, 'frequency is freedom' when it comes to public transportation offerings. I regularly drive Rt. 2 from Somerville to Central/Western MA and am all too familiar with the traffic that can occur, whether it be rush hour or at 1pm on a Saturday. Having high frequencies can also unlock new travel opportunities. Currently if one wishes to travel to Vermont by rail from Boston, one must travel all the way to New Haven to transfer to Amtrak's Vermonter, a considerable multi-hour detour (adding more time to the trip than a coach bus trip from Boston to White River Junction, VT). Having timed transfers to the Vermonter will open up new travel possibilities for Vermonters and Massachusetts residents to have a quality route to our neighbors to the north. Electrification is exciting to see as a possibility and should be seriously considered, but any action there must be done in partnership with the MBTA. It is pointless to have a high quality electrified mainline suddenly end, especially when service is even more frequent east of Wachusett with MBTA traffic. As organizations such as TransitMatters has written in white papers (as well as real experience from Caltrain in California's Bay Area), electrified service can greatly improve travel times through superior acceleration, even if all other aspects of the infrastructure remain the same. Ensuring travel times are competitive with driving is key to driving ridership for choice riders. As this route will run to North Station, a Porter Sq. stop in Boston must be maintained to allow an easy transfer from this service to the Red Line and onwards to all MBTA commuter rail and Amtrak from South Station. While North Station has the Green and Orange Line, that would only provide easy transfers to Amtrak and CR running through Back Bay - limiting transfer options to the entire Old Colony portion of the CR as well as the soon-to-open South Coast Rail.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your thoughts on electrification and additional transit connections. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 653**Name:** Yvonne Storm**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

This could open up a ton of opportunities for residents and visitors and help revitalize northern MA. Many people commute 2+ hours into NYC from the Hudson valley and north- there are many that would do the same from our region to Boston.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity and supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 654**Name:** Harold Hecker**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

Route 2 is a daily mess. We need alternatives, and rail is the logical solution - if it is expanded west.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your interest.

Comment 655**Name:** Emmett Madeson**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

I moved from Boston to Greenfield a few years ago so I could rent somewhere affordable. None of my Boston friends have cars, and the drive eastward is grueling and unpleasant to me. As a result, I haven't seen my Boston friends in a whole year. Northern Tier Passenger Rail that is affordable, reliable, and runs on weekends will allow my Boston friends to come visit me. It will also make my mom happy because I'd visit home more often.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your experience.

Comment 656

Name: Michael Goodson

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I feel that rail service to this part of Massachusetts is way over due! I myself, drive to Boston frequently for medical and entertainment purposes. It's roughly two and a half hours. Sometimes more, depending on traffic. It's discouraging sometimes, to drive it. A regular service would be a great benefit to everyone East & West. There are great attractions on both sides of the state, and this would help the economy all around. If there were a rail service, even more people from our surrounding areas would be able to have access to the happenings of all areas between the Northern Berkshires and the greater Boston area.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate you sharing your current travel experiences and support for potential expanded rail service.

Comment 657

Name: Lillian Zavatsky

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Hello, I am a resident of North Adams. A Northern Tier Passenger rail would connect our part of the state would Boston. I believe it would be a win-win, allowing two-way tourism opportunities, as well as commuting opportunities.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 658

Name: Thomas Holbrook

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

I think it's a good idea. It would give the ability for more tourism to western mass depending on the proposed schedules. It could also give people in north-western mass the ability to get work closer to Boston without moving closer.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 659**Name:** Matthew Belyea**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

This is a needless exercise in a not viable rail. Not nearly enough people / riders to warrant it. Stop it now.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your thoughts.

Comment 660**Name:** Virginia Riehl**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

I support the recommendations of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Funding should be provided to undertake a more comprehensive assessment of the costs and benefits of this project. I also support continuing to include the route through the Northern Berkshires and on to Albany. As a person without a car, I would use this service to travel to both Boston and Albany.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment regarding Alternative 5 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 661**Name:** Kara Kramer**Date:** 10/12/2024**Comment:**

I think it would be great if the commuter train went west of Fitchburg. I think it would boost the economy in many towns. I do think the fares should be affordable though.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 662**Name:** Patrick Quinn

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Regular train service between Northern Berkshire and Boston are essential for our economy to grow and thrive. To get good medical services, access to a full fledged airport and a low cost/environmentally friendly means of tourism are some of the benefits that would result. Northern Berkshire has much to offer and regular low cost passenger train service would give us some of the benefits that the eastern part of our State already enjoy.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 663

Name: James Mahon

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Thank you for the hard work on this study draft and for the opportunity to comment on it. I am very much in favor of re-establishing passenger rail service along this route. I have only three quibbles with the draft report. First, it limits its estimate of economic benefits, making it narrower than both its legislative charge as well as its own introduction (p. 18, "community impact and benefits"). It notes in passing that second-order "induced demand" should be estimated modestly (109), but it goes no further. Obviously, this is something that depends on other assumptions as well as the time period under examination. Second, it might have placed greater importance on recent increases in rail ridership both in the Commonwealth and on the route most often compared to the Northern Tier, the Downeaster. In the case of the latter, a comparison of the estimated ridership in 2005 with the pace of ridership in 2024 (or in 2019) suggests a more optimistic scenario for ridership in the NTier. Finally--and this is not a direct criticism of MassDOT, given the goals of the study--it might have noted at least briefly that western Massachusetts has been sending much more sales tax revenue to transportation projects in the east, above all the MBTA, than it has received in project value, despite the long distances that tend to inflate the road miles per capita figure. I like the T, but projects that benefit western and central Massachusetts should be considered recompense in pursuit of equity.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Information regarding estimated community and economic impacts are included in Chapter 4.

Comment 664

Name: Allen Pope
Date: 10/12/2024
Comment:

Thank you for this study!! I would LOVE to see an electric train with expanded service (combining two of the options), to serve western MA and the whole state better!! It would connect me (in the Berkshires) with my family (in eastern Mass), and also allow me to travel for work easier in our one-car family.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 665

Name: Randal Frippinger
Date: 10/12/2024
Comment:

This rail line would provide a much-needed connection between Boston and western Massachusetts. It would also create many jobs in a struggling region and give opportunities for people to move out to more affordable cities like Athol, greenfield, and north adams

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 666

Name: Sarah McNair
Date: 10/12/2024
Comment:

I want to support the service that you propose. It will increase the ability of people to live in the Berkshires, commuting East, reduce pollution, increase tourism economy.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Promoting transportation equity, supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimizing the impacts on public health and the environment from transportation were goals of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 667

Name: Dana Chase

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Having viewed the proposals I find myself in great agreement of the expansion of the East/West corridor. History itself has shown the need for such a service during the boom times of factory production. Though the mills are mostly but a memory, the towns and cities are ripe for development and new industries. I would personally use the service regularly from Gardner to Boston and to Greenfield and North Adam's. Without this service I feel that the towns along the service route will, within a decade, suffer a decrease in population with collateral economic damage.

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Supporting economic development along the Northern Tier corridor was a goal of the study and guided the development of service alternatives. We appreciate your engagement.

Comment 668

Name: Jenny Convery

Date: 10/12/2024

Comment:

Northern Hilltowns Berkshires & Western Massachusetts needs this service for our state's prosperity. Please make this happen thank you!

MassDOT Response: Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. We appreciate your engagement.



TOWN OF
AMHERST
MASSACHUSETTS

September 23, 2024

Governor Maura Healey
Office of the Governor
Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Maura Healey,

The Amherst Town Council strongly supports the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The Town of Amherst is thrilled at the prospect of expanding rail service to serve a greater variety of residents across the Commonwealth. Even in the mid-1800s, we knew the importance of rail for the residents of Amherst and the importance of access to Western Massachusetts for all residents of the Commonwealth. In 1838, Edward Dickinson, father of Emily Dickinson, was elected to represent Amherst in the state Legislature, primarily to secure Amherst the advantages of the Massachusetts Central Railroad.

As the home of our Commonwealth's flagship institution, the University of Massachusetts, as well as Amherst College and Hampshire College, we see significant shifts in our population when the campuses open for the year, when students leave and return from breaks, and at the end of the academic year. Roughly 75% of UMass's undergraduate student population is in-state, coming to campus from other cities and towns in the Commonwealth. 70% of the students who live on the UMass campus do not get a parking permit. The ability of our student community members to access campus via rail and the impact of this population on potential ridership should not be underestimated.

Thus, passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Amherst is a leader in and destination for arts and culture, with museums such as the Emily Dickinson Museum and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and performance venues such as the Drake, cultural institutions such as Amherst Cinema, and events at the University and Colleges. Expanding rail access with attention paid to last mile transportation allows for people across the state to share in these experiences. This increases our ability to bring in artists, performers, and others to share their talents from across our Commonwealth.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts, including in Amherst, are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that our more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our overlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the Valley Flyer, the residents of our region, outside of the greater Boston area, have proven their commitment to passenger rail. The ridership of this line has exceeded all expectations. We believe the same will be true for Northern Tier Rail given the ridership projections in the recently released feasibility study.

We also encourage partnerships across types of transportation that address the last mile. There is incredible promise in this initiative, for all of our communities. The benefits for access, meeting climate goals, supporting engagement and building economies are plenty. We look forward to the completion of the Northern Tier Rail and celebrate the potential benefits to Amherst and our surrounding western Massachusetts communities.

Thank you for your consideration and the work you do.

Sincerely,



Lynn Griesemer, President
On behalf of the Amherst Town Council

Cc: Kim Driscoll, Lt. Governor
Jo Comerford, State Senator, Hampshire Franklin Worcester District
Mindy Domb, State Representative, Third Hampshire District
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning Massachusetts, Department of Transportation

TOWN OF GILL

M A S S A C H U S E T T S



September 23, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

On behalf of the Selectboard of the Town of Gill, I write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities.

Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of Central and Western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in Western and Central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in Central and Western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to Central and Western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Northern Tier Rail will be one of the catalysts needed for our overlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the north-south Valley Flyer, the residents of our region, outside of the greater Boston area, have proven their commitment to passenger rail. The ridership of this line has exceeded all expectations. We believe the same will be true for Northern Tier Rail given the ridership projections in the recently released feasibility study.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Snedeker,
Chair, Selectboard

Cc: Senator Jo Comerford
Representative Susannah Whipps



**GREENFIELD
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
413-775-1410 • 413-775-4676 (fax)

September 27, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

RE: Northern Tier Rail Project

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

On behalf of Greenfield Community College I write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

Located along Route 2 corridor in the Pioneer Valley, Greenfield Community College is the only institution of higher education serving Franklin and Hampshire Counties, and as such serves as a vital educational and training resource and economic driver for the region. Franklin County, in addition to being the most rural county in Massachusetts, is also the largest county in the state by area, with towns spreading out along Route 2 both east and west of Greenfield, rising up out of the Pioneer Valley into an array of hilltowns. The residents of these hilltowns rely on our college to serve as a beacon of education and training opportunities, and the impact of our college on the well-being of the region is vast. The overall total annual impact of GCC on the region includes over \$78 million of added income via 1,250 jobs supported. In 2025, Greenfield Community College has once again been ranked as the #1 community college in Massachusetts by Niche, the top web site for students and families exploring college options.

However, the extremely rural nature of the region presents serious transportation obstacles to many of the most vulnerable people in the region who cannot afford realizable transportation to Greenfield from nearby hilltowns. The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes

undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

The Northern Tier Passenger Rail will allow the impact of Greenfield Community College's training and educational opportunities to a much broader base of constituents, allowing us to better meet the labor market needs in the region by training qualified workers in our industry-aligned training programs in Manufacturing, HVAC, Health Care, and a host of other high-need industry areas throughout the Pioneer Valley.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our overlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

I urge you to prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Sincerely,



Michelle K. Schutt, Ph.D.
President
Greenfield Community College

cc:
Andrew M. Koziol
Gus P. Bickford,
Daniel J. Racicot



TOWN OF ERVING

SELECT BOARD

12 East Main Street
ERVING, MASSACHUSETTS 01344

Tel. 413-422-2800
Email: administrator@erving-ma.gov

Jacob A. Smith, Chair
Scott Bastarache
James Loynd
Select Board

Bryan Smith
Town Administrator

September 30, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

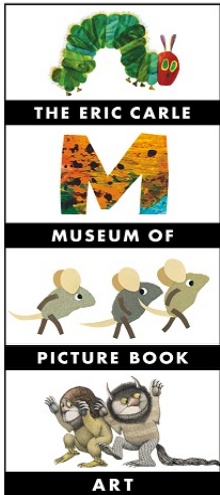
On behalf of the Town of Erving, the Select Board is writing you to express our support of the Northern Tier Rail Project. The expansion of the Northern Tier Rail connecting the Western, Central and Eastern parts of the Commonwealth, is a vital component in ensuring that our community, along with the rest of the Commonwealth has the opportunity for high level multi-modal transportation. We believe that this project can be a key component in allowing many in our region access to the entire Commonwealth with a greater ease than is currently offered. In turn, it also connects the rest of the Commonwealth with many of our small rural communities along this corridor, such as Erving.

Throughout the Northern Tier Rail and Route 2 corridor there are many communities that offer a variety of small business and attractions that would benefit greatly by allowing so many to gain access to the area. Many of the communities along this corridor are continuing to feel the effects of an economic decline. The Northern Tier Rail project is an opportunity to help boost the economies in this area and spur some growth. We look at the Northern Tier Rail project as an opportunity for the Western and Central regions of the Commonwealth to allow our region to expand our economic opportunities, increase housing opportunities and assist in decreasing overall congestion on our already heavily traveled corridor.

Thank you for your time and we hope you will continue to commit to the Northern Tier Rail becoming a reality!

Respectfully,

Scott Bastarache
Select Board Member



Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO

Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator

David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

10 Park Plaza

Boston, Massachusetts 02116

October 4, 2024

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

We write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is the international champion for picture book art founded by the beloved picture book artist and creator of the iconic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Eric Carle and his wife Barbara Carle who made their home for many years in western Massachusetts. We are the premiere Museum in the United States dedicated solely to picture book art.

Situated on 7.5 acres in Amherst, Massachusetts, The Carle houses a rich and deep collection of art of more than 300 picture book artists, and illuminates its collection through exhibitions, education, programming, and art-making—making it a critical resource for picture book artists and authors, and art-loving communities locally, nationally, and abroad.

Since opening more than 20 years ago, The Carle has welcomed more than one million visitors—plus more than four million additional museumgoers who have enjoyed touring exhibitions around the world.

The Museum employs more than 50 staff, volunteers and interns and we play an integral role in the area's cultural community, the five-college community and the wider Connecticut River Valley communities.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities.

Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

Expanding the rail service and improving transportation from urban areas in the east and south would be an enormous benefit to our Museum. Many people have told us that transportation to the Museum and the area in general is challenging and for those without a car it is very hard to plan a day trip and expensive to stay over night. We have 50,000 visitors a year, but we would love to have 100,000 and we believe many more people would come if transportation was more readily available.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer Schantz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" and last name "Schantz" clearly legible.

Jennifer Schantz

Jennifer Schantz
Executive Director
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA 01002
413-559-6343
JenniferS@carlemuseum.org
www.carlemuseum.org



NORTHFIELD
MOUNT HERMON

October 4, 2024

2024 OCT 17 PM 10:06

✓ Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

I write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project and the Commonwealth's continued investment in infrastructure in the central and western parts of the state.

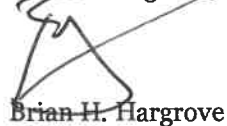
I have the honor to lead Northfield Mount Hermon, a boarding school in Gill, Massachusetts with students from 35-plus states and 60 countries. With 630 students from across the country and around the world, our school community depends on reliable access to Boston. The fact that we must rely on private transportation or commercial bus service challenges our community and diminishes our ability to build strong connectivity with the eastern part of the state.

Alumni often speak of the days when they could catch the train from Mt. Hermon to Boston (or to Greenfield for other connections to New York City). This proved a major advantage in enrollment then, and it would be now. Quite simply, families want easier access to Boston and New York City. The Valley Flyer has addressed the latter; now, we need to address the former and deliver rail to Boston from Greenfield.

We know well that the central and western parts of the Commonwealth have not benefited from the prosperity of the eastern part of the state. Economic growth has been negligible; the population is declining; and there is limited prospect of reversing these trends without new investment. Connecting Boston to central and western Massachusetts opens new avenues that will benefit all residents of the Commonwealth as the population in the east accesses more affordable housing and as businesses access the strength found in our region, including a highly skilled labor pool and world-class educational institutions from elementary to university levels. Rail is the environmentally responsible and most cost effective way to open this corridor.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,



Brian H. Hargrove
Head of School
Northfield Mount Hermon



October 4, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Northern Tier Rail Project.

Located in the heart of the Pioneer Valley, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is the largest public university in New England and one of the top public research universities in the nation.

As the Commonwealth's flagship campus, UMass Amherst is a critical economic engine fueling the Massachusetts innovation economy. Our university is home to nearly 32,000 students and over 6,000 full-time faculty and staff. Seventy-two percent of our undergraduate student body is from Massachusetts, the majority of whom come from Greater Boston. We award more undergraduate STEM degrees than any other college or university in the state, public or private. This includes the fields of data science, cybersecurity, applied life sciences, engineering, clean energy, and sustainability – all of which align with the Commonwealth's critical knowledge-based industries. Most of our bachelor's degree recipients stay in Massachusetts once they graduate.

Increasing access opportunities is fundamental to our mission as a land-grant university. Expanding the passenger rail along the Northern Tier to connect both Boston and North Adams with Greenfield would support this critical mission by bringing more reliable and sustainable transportation options to our region and creating new opportunities for students from more rural, economically disadvantaged, and underserved communities to reach our campus and pursue their degrees.

Similarly, as one of the largest employers in Western Massachusetts, expanded passenger rail service would provide more opportunities for our faculty and staff to put down roots in rural and other overlooked areas, helping to bring more economic activity and mobility along the Northern Tier corridor and boosting opportunities for growth.

UMass Amherst is a leader in research, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Our faculty and researchers conduct over \$80 million annually in sustainability-related research. The expansion and electrification of this rail system fits with our revolutionary spirit. With the UMass Transportation Center, we stand ready to assist the Commonwealth in bringing reliable electric rail up the Route 2 corridor.

I urge you to prioritize making the Norther Tier Rail a reality. If there is anything that the university can do to help in achieving this goal, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Javier A. Reyes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Javier A. Reyes
Chancellor

October 7, 2024



TO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation

RE: Montachusett MPO Comment on Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this official comment prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), staff to the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO). First and foremost, the MMPO would like to express sincere gratitude for the substantial and meaningful work done on the Northern Tier Rail Study, helping to build the foundation in our Region and in our Commonwealth for equitable transportation access, economic development and access, modal shift, and climate change mitigation.

Of the six passenger rail corridor development scenarios outlined in the [Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study](#)¹, **Alternative 3, Electrified Passenger Rail Service from North Adams to Boston with stops in Athol, Fitchburg, and Ayer shows the greatest benefit to the Montachusett region and the best long-term return on investment, overall, for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.** This forward-looking investment in clean transportation intersects with our Regional Transportation Plan and our greenhouse gas and environmental harm reduction goals. It provides economic and transportation equity and access for our communities, particularly the environmental justice populations along the Northern Tier Rail corridor.

Electrified Passenger Rail Service is consistent with low carbon travel principles which serve community eco-tourism economic development goals² that seek to benefit from, sustain, and preserve the Montachusett region's natural resources and rural character.

Electrified Passenger Rail Service will also help promote, secure, and improve accessibility to the burgeoning green economy in the [Devens Regional Enterprise Zone](#)³ in the Montachusett region where billions of dollars in economic activity are generated and where cutting-edge green development, net-zero-energy housing,⁴ and thousands of jobs in ground-breaking technologies, including renewable energy technologies,⁵⁶ are laying the foundation for a resilient future. It is fitting that our region be served by clean, modern, efficient, and accessible electrified passenger rail service.

In comparing Alternative 3 to the other five Alternatives presented in the Study, **Alternative 3 is shown to be most advantageous in almost all key service impact projections** (from the Study):

- The highest Estimated Annual Ridership
- The lowest Operating and Maintenance Cost Per Rider
- The highest Transportation Cost Savings Per Rider in both the Low and High Ridership scenarios.
- The greatest reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled in both Low and High Ridership scenarios.

- The greatest positive Economic Impacts from Construction.
- The greatest Peak Employment/Number of Jobs, direct, indirect, and induced.

Further, the scope of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study is not able to fully capture costs specific to diesel service alternatives when contrasted with electrified service, including:

- The impact of diesel engine versus quieter electric engine service in noise decibel levels and vibration on home and business values and quality of life for populations along the railway
- The impact and costs associated with fine particulate matter, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO²), Carbon Dioxide (CO²), and other diesel exhaust byproducts on environmental and human health, particularly for the environmental justice populations clustered along the railway who suffer disproportionately from asthma and cardiopulmonary disease
- The impact and costs in lost construction efficiencies, service disruption, and delayed health and environmental benefits by building, as an interim solution, a diesel/fossil fuel dependent passenger rail system that should, subsequently, be retrofitted to an electrified/renewable energy system as the state strives to meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations will result in substantial and unnecessary future burden to the Commonwealth and the communities being served.

Alternative 3, Electrified Service, makes substantial progress addressing five (5) of the seven (7) goals and objectives outlined the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization Regional Transportation Plan, Journey to 2050:

- Reduce congestion and improve mobility. (Goal 2)
- Promote the development of improvements and options across all modes for areas that serve Title VI and Environmental Justice populations. (Goal 3)
- Improve economic vitality by promoting transit and commuter rail options and improving access to job clusters and employment centers and economic development priority areas. (Goal 5)
- Promote and encourage a shift from single occupant vehicles to transit. (Goal 6)
- Reduce Greenhouse Gases and promote sustainable environmental practices. (Goal 7)

Finally, it is MMPO's position that Gardner should be added as a train stop in Alternative 3 and any other scenarios without replacing stops already included in those scenarios (North Station, Porter Square, Ayer, Fitchburg, Athol, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield and North Adams):

- Of the communities west of Fitchburg in the Northern Tier Rail study, the City of Gardner has the highest population, 21,000.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of Gardner's population lives in Environmental Justice Census Block Groups.
- Geographically, Gardner is located at the mid-point between Fitchburg and Athol, stops included in Alternative 3.
- Gardner has institutions that are a significant population draw for jobs and services, notably Heywood hospital and Mount Wachusett Community College, both with proximity to the North Central Pathway which supports multimodal transit options.
- Gardner serves as an important public transit transfer hub for rural communities north, south, and west of Gardner.

The MMPO would also like to recognize the complex challenges to funding and constructing passenger rail service on the Norther Tier, as detailed in the study. The "Recommended Next Steps" identified in the study will be important in working toward achieving this service. MMPO would like to stress the importance of including a timeline for these "Recommended Next Steps". A well-structured timeline is essential for successful planning, execution, and completion, ensuring that goals will be met, and value will be delivered to our communities. **MMPO asks to be kept apprised of any timeline development.**

Again, thank you for all the work done on the Northern Tier Rail Study. MMPO looks forward to active and ongoing participation in this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Glenn Eaton", with a stylized, flowing script.

Glenn Eaton, Executive Director
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission



Board of Directors

October 7, 2024

Barry Roberts,
President

Sarah Barr,
Vice President

Sharon Povinelli,
Treasurer

Tony Maroulis,
Secretary

Jeremy Austin

Paul Bockelman

Andrew Bohne

Ewen Chen

Jerry Jones

David Mazor

Alex Laguerra Sierra

Sharon Sharpy

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler,

I am writing on behalf of the Amherst Business Improvement District (BID) to express our strong support for the Northern Tier Rail Project. As a central stakeholder in the economic vitality of downtown Amherst, we believe that enhanced rail service, especially the proposed east-west rail, would have a transformative impact on our community and the region.

The Amherst BID represents a diverse array of businesses and institutions that rely on connectivity to thrive. As a college town and a cultural destination, Amherst depends heavily on the flow of visitors, workers, and residents. An improved rail connection will make it easier for workers to commute to the area, broadening the pool of potential employees for our local businesses. It will also strengthen tourism, a crucial driver of our local economy, bringing more visitors to experience our restaurants, shops, and cultural landmarks.

Transportation options in our region are currently limited, making it harder for both employers and employees to access opportunities. Multi-modal transportation options, such as the Northern Tier Rail, will bring about more equitable economic expansion for central and western Massachusetts, ensuring that communities like ours can grow, prosper, and contribute to the Commonwealth's broader goals of sustainable development.

Moreover, reliable rail service would reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the Commonwealth's climate goals. By decreasing single-occupant vehicle trips, we can improve air quality and create a more sustainable future for our community.

The Northern Tier Rail would enhance Amherst's appeal to prospective businesses, families, and investors by providing convenient access to Boston and beyond, making our community more attractive to the next generation of residents and entrepreneurs. We strongly urge you to prioritize this project and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality for the benefit of the entire Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmest regards,

BAR

Barry Roberts
President
Amherst Business Improvement District

AMHERST BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

35 South Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002 / 413.345.2945 / info@amherstdowntown.com



October 8, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

I am writing you to voice my strong support for the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to access those opportunities.

As the premier business class air transportation facility in central Massachusetts, we serve some fifteen thousand travelers annually from all over the country. The Orange Municipal Airport has become the gateway to economic development for the entire central and western part of the state. Business travelers regularly comment to our staff on the abundance of economic opportunities in our region. However, they also comment on the lack of ground transportation options available.

Connecting the Orange Municipal Airport to Northern Tier Rail is widely considered by our business and recreational travelers alike as essential to the economic growth of our region.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal public transit options.

Northern Tier Rail can help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth. Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the

poorest in Massachusetts. Communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier would help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage a more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. The expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can also provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that our more urban, eastern counterparts are currently facing.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards.

Len Bedaw
Orange Municipal Airport Manager

October 8, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

We write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

Baystate Health is the largest provider of health care services in western Massachusetts, delivering more than 60% of all care in the three counties along the Interstate 91 corridor. Together with Baystate Franklin Medical Center, one of our three community hospitals, Baystate Health supports nearly 1,400 jobs and 800 households in Franklin County alone.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center has a long tradition of providing vital and necessary health care to this area, dating back to 1895. As we seek to attract and retain an outstanding workforce to serve the region, a modern transportation infrastructure is a critical component to our vision. We have seen what the expansion of rail has done to other parts of our state and remain hopeful this investment will produce similar results.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underlooked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,



Jodi B. Stack, RN
President, Chief Operating Officer
Baystate Franklin Medical Center



Michael Knapik
Vice President, Government Relations
Baystate Health

cc: andrew.m.koziol@dot.state.ma.gov
gus.p.bickford@dot.state.ma.us
daniel.j.racicot@dot.state.ma.gov



October 8, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Northern Tier Rail Study. We commend the efforts to engage diverse stakeholders across the Commonwealth in this critical initiative.

Our Chamber's Public Policy Agenda, and our regional economic development plan, [One North Central](#), underscore the critical need for enhanced transportation infrastructure throughout North Central Massachusetts. This improved connectivity is essential to not only retain our current skilled workforce but also to attract new talent and businesses, driving economic growth in our region. Furthermore, we recognize the limitations of Route 2 as a primary transportation artery, and the proposed Northern Tier Rail project presents an excellent opportunity to diversify our transit options, significantly increasing mobility while simultaneously addressing regional congestion. Importantly, this rail initiative aligns perfectly with the administration's ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, offering a sustainable transportation solution that will benefit our communities for generations to come.

While the study's various alternatives primarily focus on connecting North Adams to Boston, we strongly urge the state to recognize and capitalize on the immense potential for local service connectivity among the diverse communities along the corridor. Specifically, we advocate for the strategic incorporation of stops in Athol and Gardner, regardless of the chosen alternative. This approach would unlock transformative opportunities for intra-regional commuting within North Central Massachusetts.

The Chamber represents numerous employers whose workforces would benefit from enhanced rail connectivity, particularly with stops in the Athol and Gardner areas. These additions would not only serve existing businesses but also act as a catalyst for economic growth. As we actively work to attract new employers to our region, the presence of an efficient, accessible rail network becomes a significant competitive advantage. This improved transportation infrastructure will undoubtedly serve as a major selling point, showcasing our region's commitment to sustainable growth and workforce mobility.

Furthermore, these local stops would foster greater community interconnectedness, reduce road congestion, and provide environmentally friendly transportation options for residents. This aligns with our collective vision for a more accessible, sustainable, and economically vibrant North Central Massachusetts.

In addition to helping grow the economy by supporting our workforce and attracting new employers and talent to the region, we also believe Northern Tier Rail can address critical transportation barriers and open up new employment opportunities for residents, particularly those without personal vehicles. We urge that the proposed rail service offer seamless connectivity with regional and local transportation options, including bus services provided by the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) and the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), dedicated shuttle services, bikes, and on-demand transportation services.

This rail expansion also aligns perfectly with the Commonwealth's efforts to increase affordable and market rate housing through the historic Affordable Homes Act. By providing efficient transportation options to central and western Massachusetts, the Northern Tier Rail project will help to relieve housing pressures currently faced by our more urban, eastern counterparts. This enhanced mobility will open up new possibilities for sustainable development while allowing residents to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

We also see the Northern Tier Rail project as a tremendous opportunity to boost our region's growing tourism sector. Tourism has been identified as a priority industry in our regional economic development strategy. Our data clearly shows that a substantial portion of our visitors hail from the lucrative Boston and New York markets, representing untapped potential for growth. Enhanced rail connectivity along the Northern Tier will serve as a vital conduit, increasing accessibility for these key origin markets. This improved access will invariably translate into an influx of visitors, driving substantial economic benefits across our diverse array of local businesses, from our restaurants and orchards to our parks and other unique attractions.

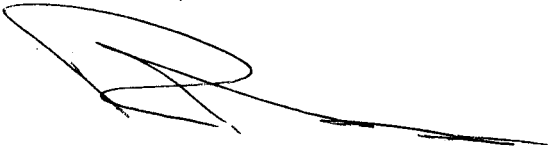
We have already witnessed the transformative impact of improved rail access in our region. Wachusett Mountain, for instance, has experienced an increase in visitors following the introduction of the Wachusett Station, underscoring the direct correlation between rail connectivity and tourism growth. We believe that additional stops along the proposed Northern Tier Rail will replicate and amplify this positive effect across our region's numerous attractions. From the scenic beauty of the Nashua River Rail Trail to the cultural richness of Fitchburg Art Museum, and the historical significance of sites like Doane's Falls in Royalston, each new stop represents a gateway to our region's diverse offerings. By facilitating easy, sustainable access to these attractions, the Northern Tier Rail will not only boost our tourism economy but also promote environmentally conscious travel, aligning with our commitment to sustainable regional development.

Moreover, we strongly advocate for a balanced approach that preserves and enhances the vital role of freight rail alongside the new passenger service. It is imperative that the implementation of the Northern Tier Rail project be carefully orchestrated to minimize disruptions to existing freight operations. By ensuring the harmonious coexistence of passenger and cargo transportation on these tracks, we can maximize the economic benefits for our region. This dual-use strategy will not only improve passenger mobility but also maintain the efficiency of our supply chains, creating a robust, multi-faceted rail system that serves diverse economic needs. We urge planners to employ innovative scheduling and infrastructure solutions that allow both passenger and freight trains to operate smoothly, avoiding delays and disruptions that could undermine the project's overall value to our communities and businesses.

We believe that the Northern Tier Rail project is not just a transportation initiative, but is a transformative influence capable of creating a more balanced and accessible Massachusetts. This

visionary project bridges critical gaps in housing, employment, and transportation, while simultaneously driving robust economic growth across our region. The ripple effects of this strategic investment will resonate for generations, fostering sustainable development, unlocking new opportunities, and markedly improving the quality of life for all our residents. We urge you to prioritize the realization of this project, with particular emphasis on including stops in Athol and Gardner to ensure comprehensive local service along the proposed route. The time for decisive action is now. By collaboratively bringing the Northern Tier Rail to fruition, we seize an unprecedented opportunity to forge a more connected, prosperous, and equitable North Central Massachusetts. The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce stands ready to support and collaborate on this initiative in every way possible. We believe, if implemented correctly, that this project can help to unlock the full potential of our region, and can serve as a model for integrated, forward-thinking infrastructure development in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a prominent loop and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Roy Nascimento, CCE, IOM
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected loops and strokes.

Travis Condon
Public Affairs Manager

October 9, 2024

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

We write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

Since 1970, Hampshire College has been both a proud and prized member of the Amherst community. Nearly one thousand students reside on our campus every school year, and we employ over 300 people at the College. We offer a progressive, self-directed program and, while our reach is international, Massachusetts remains the top state from which our students hail.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities. The Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

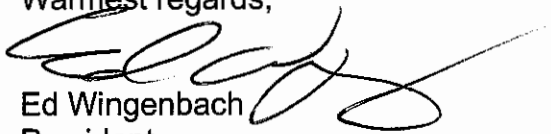
Rail service would allow Hampshire students to reach the Boston area more easily, as well as for families from Boston to visit our area. It will allow for greater cross-state pollination of talent as well. Faculty and staff could more easily share in the cultural wealth of the city and share that with our students. In turn, our faculty could more easily bring their scholarship and expertise to other academics, political leaders and participate in conferences and other academic gatherings. It also aligns with our institutional values. Public transportation is a matter of equity, of climate justice, and accessibility.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options. Hampshire College achieved carbon neutrality in 2022 and is committed to driving down its carbon footprint even further.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Wingenbach', written over the printed name.

Ed Wingenbach
President
Hampshire College



Danielle R. Holley
President

50 College Street
South Hadley, MA 01075
t 413.538.2500
f 413.538.2391
dholley@mtholyoke.edu

2024 OCT 22 AM 11:20

October 10, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

We at Mount Holyoke College write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

As the leading gender-diverse women's college, Mount Holyoke has been a place where bold leaders and boundless learners make a better world. That vision is possible partly because we believe students should not be bound by socio-economical or geographical boundaries they may face.

The strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities.

Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts. By and large, communities along this corridor are experiencing stagnant or declining population and suffering from economic decline, while the average age of residents is growing older.

Many businesses in western and central Massachusetts are small or very small. The loss or closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community's character and economy. When combined with the decline of manufacturing, the economic downturn through which Northern Tier communities are struggling becomes undeniable. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. Coupled with the historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to constructing and rehabilitating affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts, the expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

The Northern Tier Rail Project expands the possibilities for potential students living along the Route 2 corridor to have public transportation access to our college. It allows our current students to have a method of transportation to cities and towns along the corridor into Boston, thus expanding their internship and job placement opportunities. It opens a new avenue for faculty and staff who are facing the incredibly tight housing shortage that plagues the state of Massachusetts. Most importantly, it opens the floodgates for collaboration between some of the nation's best colleges and universities that are located in Eastern, Central and Western Massachusetts.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when our region does not have robust, multi-modal transit options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our under-looked and underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Holley". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first and last names clearly distinguishable.

Danielle R. Holley

President, Mount Holyoke College



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

October 10, 2024

Dear Governor Healey, Secretary Tibbits-Nutt and Administrator Slesinger,

We write in strong support of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail project as the study is in its final public review period. We believe that investment in the return of passenger rail on the Route 2 corridor is critical and worthy of state and federal investment. The implementation of Northern Tier Passenger Rail has the potential to be transformative for Massachusetts.

As you are aware, the towns in the Northern Tier are among the poorest in the state and the goals of this project are of particular relevance to future growth. The first goal of the study is to "support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor" and the third goal is to "promote transportation equity". For these two goals alone, the administration should commit to restoring passenger rail service along the Northern Tier corridor. Future population projections for western Massachusetts, if they come true, will have catastrophic impacts on western Massachusetts and, consequently, the entire Commonwealth.

Every effort should be made to prevent those population projections from becoming reality. This will require dedicated and thoughtful planning and investment. Reversing the declining population projections is the underpinning of all of the work of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, municipalities and legislators in western Massachusetts. It should be a shared goal of the Administration and every state agency, and will require bold thinking and investment that is not based on formulas that rely on population. Thinking toward the future, investing now to expand transportation opportunities between eastern and western MA will aid in the state's need for more affordable housing outside of the Boston area, help to encourage climate migration to western Massachusetts instead of out of the state, and increase transportation equity and economic opportunity for a long ignored and undervalued part of Massachusetts. We feel that the positive outcome of this expanded rail far outweighs the negatives identified in this report.

The report notes that while there are issues that are difficult like the challenge of the corridor being used by two freight rail operators, investment in the corridor also has many advantages. The report notes that there are minimal environmental impacts along the corridor and that the investment, while significant, is far less than many other projects prioritized by the Commonwealth at approximately \$1.5b. It is a great investment in the future of the Commonwealth.

We recognize that another significant challenge is the report's calculations of a negative cost-benefit number, which will make receipt of Federal Railroad Administration funds more difficult. While true, the report also identifies several projects that would improve freight operations along the corridor that would also aid in the restoration of passenger rail. Pursuing federal funds for those projects will reduce the overall state investment needed and move the project forward to the advantage of both freight operations and future passenger service.

We also encourage you to consider investing in the corridor from east to west and in stages – expand to Athol, then to Greenfield and then to North Adams and eventually between these stops in Gardner and Shelburne Falls. As demonstrated by the continuing growth in ridership of the Valley Flyer, which was not projected by original feasibility studies and has far exceeded the original projections, the residents of western Massachusetts yearn for transportation alternatives and use it when it is made available. Staging investment and expansion will allow ridership to grow over time making the investment westward more justified and cost effective. It will also give the Regional Planning Agencies and Regional Transit Authorities time to expand microtransit services that will expand the ridership range of passengers and improve multi-modal efficiencies. The Northern Tier passenger rail has excellent potential for phasing the development of service.

It is time to make transformational investments in western Massachusetts. This is one of those investments that will reap benefit to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda Dunlavy", is written over a faint, light blue horizontal line.

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director

October 3, 2024

The Franklin Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI) was formed to ensure that the regional leaders of Franklin County work collaboratively and in partnership for the benefit of Franklin County.

The members of FREDI include: Community Action Pioneer Valley; the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce; the Franklin County Community Development Corporation; the Franklin Regional Council of Governments; the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority; Greenfield Community College; MassHire Franklin-Hampshire Career Center; and the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board.


FREDI member organizations recognize the potential transformational benefit of expanding passenger rail along the Route 2 corridor to the long-term economy and well-being of Franklin County. We support the letter submitted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Sincerely,


Clare Higgins, Executive Director
Community Action Pioneer Valley



Jessye Dean, Executive Director
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce


John Waite, Executive Director
Franklin County Community Development
Corporation


Gina Govini, Executive Director
Franklin County Regional Housing and
Redevelopment Authority


Michelle Schutt, President
Greenfield Community College


Maura Geary, Executive Director
MassHire Franklin-Hampshire Career Center


Sarah Wilson, Executive Director
MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board

10 October 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

On behalf of the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts, I write in strong support of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The Emily Dickinson Museum comprises two historic houses in the center of Amherst, Massachusetts associated with the poet Emily Dickinson and members of her family during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Emily Dickinson is considered to be one of the finest poets in the English language. In a Commonwealth so rich in literary history, Dickinson's concise verse, range of themes, and timeless relevance makes her Amherst home a much sought-after tourism destination. Among its 35 employees are several who have settled here specifically because it was Dickinson's home town. With a growing program portfolio as well as active restoration and new construction plans, the Museum grows ever more attractive as a destination and cultural anchor.

From a western micropolitan perspective, the strength of the Commonwealth requires that all communities have equitable opportunities for resiliency, growth, and economic expansion. Multi-modal transportation is essential to those opportunities.

Northern Tier Rail will help meet the critical needs of central and western Massachusetts while advancing the wellbeing and goals of the entire Commonwealth. The expansion of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier can provide the transportation mobility necessary to help relieve housing pressures that more urban, eastern counterparts are facing currently. It will open up travel to central and western Massachusetts while also allowing people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

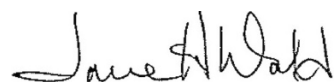
Since the pandemic, when the Museum's programming was delivered virtually, its international and national audience has grown sharply. That remote audience growth is now driving in-person attendance in a positive direction. After re-opening in 2022, in-person visits have risen dramatically each year. Moreover, approximately 85% of our onsite audience comes from beyond a 50-mile radius. Onsite and hybrid program participants come from all 50 states and more than 80 countries.

There really is no reasonable way to reach Amherst from Boston other than automobile transportation. For some prospective visitors, a rail system serving western Massachusetts would make their journey much easier. For others, it would be the decisive factor in whether to extend their visit by taking in the cultural riches of this part of the Commonwealth. For a Town like Amherst, where small business owners suffer in the summer from the absence of most of its academic population, increasing tourism traffic would have a valuable impact. Strengthening small businesses leads to a healthier local economy, an ability to attract permanent residents, and provide adequate housing options.

Ultimately, Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane H. Wald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" being more prominent.

Jane H. Wald

Jane and Robert Keiter Family Executive Director



278 Main Street, Suite 204
PO Box 1315, Greenfield, MA 01302
Office: 413.475.6282
gba.4greenfield@gmail.com

October 10, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning

Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

As a key organization supporting local business development in Greenfield, we have a vested interest in fostering economic growth and sustainability in our region, and I am writing to express my full-throated support for the Northern Tier Rail Project, which seeks to reestablish passenger rail service between North Adams and Boston. This initiative is not only crucial for regional economic development but also addresses pressing climate change needs, while significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents and businesses throughout the region.

As we watch the hurricanes ravaging the Southeast, it feels more important than ever to advocate for alternative modes of transportation that will help to mitigate these potential climate catastrophes in our own future. Greenfield has seen an influx of both residential migration and business development post-covid, with individuals and families seeking out a lifestyle that brings them closer to nature while not sacrificing the culture and community that they initially sought in urban areas. It is critical to assess the societal turn towards more rural living, and continue to close the gap in resources and investment flowing between the eastern and western edges of our state. Projects like this acknowledge this shift and encourage people moving into Massachusetts to consider living in less densely populated areas which, as we've seen all too well of late, can help ameliorate some of the warming impacts in and around urban areas.

From an economic perspective, reliable and efficient transportation options are the backbone of business development and regional prosperity. The Northern Tier rail line has the potential to catalyze economic growth in Greenfield and surrounding communities by connecting our workforce to new job markets, expanding tourism all the way out to Mass Moca, and encouraging business investments along the corridor. Enhanced passenger rail service will provide businesses in Greenfield, and throughout Franklin County, a direct link to Boston - one of the nation's leading economic hubs. This connection will stimulate new commercial opportunities, support the expansion of existing enterprises, and create a more integrated and resilient regional economy. It will likewise enable our remote worker population to grow, encouraging young professionals to make the choice to live in beautiful Franklin County, while easily maintaining a connection to Worcester, Boston, and other key industry centers.

Furthermore, as we face the challenges of climate change, the Northern Tier Rail Project aligns perfectly with the Commonwealth's climate goals and commitments to reducing carbon emissions, as transportation remains one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts. By

offering a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving, the Northern Tier rail service will help reduce congestion on major highways, lower vehicular emissions, and ultimately support the state's transition to a greener future. Public transportation is a cornerstone of any robust climate strategy and a more equitable society, and this project will contribute significantly to our region's sustainability efforts.

Beyond the economic and environmental benefits, reestablishing passenger rail service will profoundly enhance the quality of life for residents in Greenfield and beyond. Many residents currently commute long distances by car, sacrificing time and well-being in the process. The Northern Tier Rail Project will provide a convenient, affordable, and reliable transportation option that reduces commuting times, decreases travel stress, and improves overall accessibility to educational, cultural, and healthcare resources. For residents and businesses alike, having access to efficient rail service is not just a convenience—it's a necessity for creating a vibrant and connected community.

In conclusion, the Northern Tier Rail Project is more than a transportation initiative; it is a critical investment in the future of our region. It will bolster economic development, support state climate goals, and significantly improve the quality of life for the people of Greenfield and the entire Northern Tier. I strongly urge stakeholders and policymakers to prioritize and expedite this project to unlock its transformative potential for our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am confident that with your support, we can make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Rechtschaffen', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Hannah Rechtschaffen
Director, Greenfield Business Association



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

MALCOLM FICK, Chair
JOHN DUVAL, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
BUCK DONOVAN, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO
Executive Director

October 10, 2024,

Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
Administrator Meredith Slesinger
Executive Director David Mohle

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler,

I strongly support the Northern Tier Passenger Rail project as the study is in its final public review period. I believe investment in the return of passenger rail on the Route 2 corridor is critical and worthy of state and federal investment. The implementation of Northern Tier Passenger Rail has the potential to be transformative for all of Massachusetts.

As you are aware, the towns in the Northern Tier are among the poorest in the state and the goals of this project are of relevance to future growth. The first goal of the study is to "support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor" and the third goal is to "promote transportation equity." For these two goals alone, the administration should commit to restoring passenger rail service along the Northern Tier corridor. Future population projections for western Massachusetts, if they come true, will have catastrophic impacts on western Massachusetts and, consequently, the entire Commonwealth.

Every effort should be made to prevent those population projections from becoming reality. This will require resolute and thoughtful planning and investment. Reversing the declining population projections is the underpinning of the work of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, municipalities, and legislators in western Massachusetts. It should be a shared goal of the Administration and every state agency. It will require bold thinking and investment that is not based on formulas that rely on population or projected use based on existing population. Lessons learned from adding highway capacity show more induced growth once the capacity is increased, substantiating the adage of "built it and they will come." An efficient affordable passenger rail service will be used and draw more users. Thinking toward the future, investing now to expand transportation opportunities between eastern and western MA will aid in the state's need for more affordable housing outside of the Boston area, help to encourage climate migration to western Massachusetts instead of out of the state, and increase transportation equity and economic opportunity for a long ignored and undervalued part of Massachusetts.

The report notes that while there are issues that are difficult like the challenge of the corridor being used by two freight rail operators, investment in the corridor also has many advantages. The report notes that there are minimal environmental

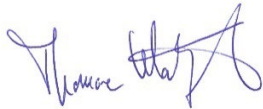
impacts along the corridor and that the investment, while significant, is far less than many other projects prioritized by the Commonwealth at approximately \$1.5b. It is a great investment in the future of the Commonwealth and a great example of the type of bold action required to make meaningful change.

The report identifies several projects that would improve freight operations along the corridor that would also aid in the restoration of passenger rail. Immediately pursuing federal funds for those projects will reduce the overall state investment needed for passenger services and move the project forward to the advantage of both freight operations and future passenger service.

As demonstrated by the success of the Berkshire Flyer and the continuing growth in ridership of the Valley Flyer in the Connecticut River Valley, visitors to and residents of western Massachusetts yearn for transportation alternatives and use it when it is available. Both efforts exceeded the original projections.

It is time to make transformational investments in western Massachusetts. This is one of those investments that will reap benefit to the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Matuszko", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

Maura Healey, Governor
Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation

October 11, 2024

Re: Supporting Restart of Northern Tier Passenger Rail

Governor Healey, Lieutenant Governor Driscoll, Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger and Executive Director Mohler:

As the legislative delegation spanning Fitchburg to North Adams, along or accessible to the Route 2 corridor, we write with the **strongest possible support for the Administration's continued focus on a restart of Northern Tier Passenger Rail**.

West/east passenger rail service along Route 2 began initially in the mid 1800s, connecting the communities we represent with Boston and metropolitan areas to the west. This was the same era that also saw the launch of what was called the Rabbit Run Railroad in the late 1800s. This was north/south service, which connected the Town of Athol to the City of Springfield, running many trains each day through the Swift River Valley.

Rabbit Run ceased operations in the mid 1930s, as the state disincorporated and flooded four communities so that eastern Massachusetts could have access to potable water in perpetuity. Then, in 1958, the state cut back Northern Tier Rail to Fitchburg, leaving the communities to the west completely devoid of rail service. More recent investments along the corridor with the support of federal funding have resulted in extended MBTA service and the construction of a train layover facility in Westminster and the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station in west Fitchburg. And still, communities west of Fitchburg along this corridor remain disconnected.

Fast forward to the present day and an Administration that has consistently demonstrated its commitment to regional equity, never losing sight of the priorities of central and western Massachusetts. We celebrate the permanent north/south service via the wildly-successful Valley Flyer, running through the Connecticut River Valley and surpassing all projections. We also strongly support the emerging southern tier west/east service, connecting Pittsfield to Boston.

Yet many of the communities we represent will remain inequitably isolated and woefully underserved without the state's additional focus on the restoration of passenger rail along the northern corridor of the Commonwealth.

We recognize that you have received expert and enthusiastic testimony from Planning Agencies in Berkshire, Franklin, and Worcester Counties, as well as the Western Mass Rail Coalition. We are grateful for and generally endorse these entities' testimony. Similarly, we believe that you have begun to receive a passionate outpouring of interest from our municipalities, regional stakeholders, and constituents.

This project has ignited an urgent hope along the Route 2 corridor in struggling communities too long ignored and undervalued by state government.

There is a strong, shared belief that restarting Northern Tier Passenger Rail service will strengthen our municipal and regional economies, increase viable transportation access and relieve traffic burdens along Route 2 and other west/east routes for the region, arrest debilitating population decline, and help protect our environment.

We are grateful for the steadfast work of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) planning team and the thorough report prepared for public engagement.

We recognize that the report surfaced both the benefits and challenges of moving forward. Yet we believe the benefits far outway any hurdles, which are surely "leapable" by your highly capable Administration, dedicated to representing the entire Commonwealth.

As you consider your next steps, please think of us as allies in this work — which will boost regional equity, bolster local economies, and advance the overall well-being of the communities we represent for generations.

Warmest regards,

Jo Comerford
State Senator
Hampshire Franklin Worcester district

Paul Mark
State Senator
Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire district

John Cronin
State Senator
Worcester and Middlesex district

Jamie Eldridge
State Senator
Middlesex and Worcester district

Natalie M. Blais
State Representative
1st Franklin district

John Barrett, III
State Representative
1st Berkshire district

Mindy Domb
State Representative
3rd Hampshire district

Susannah Whipps
State Representative
2nd Franklin district

Jon Zlotnik
State Representative
2nd Worcester district

cc:

Yvonne Hao, Secretary of Economic Development
Anne Gobi, Director of Rural Affairs
Kristen Elechko, Director of Western Massachusetts Office of the Governor



2024 Board of Directors

Anna Bowen
Strada Footwear

Jamie Cocco
Empowered Social Media

Lou Davis
Davis Financial Group

Jennifer Ewers, VICE PRESIDENT
Edward Jones Investments

Christopher Gallivan
Complete Payroll Solutions

Caroline Gear
International language Institute

Douglas Gilbert, TREASURER
Florence Bank

Vince Jackson, CLERK
Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce

Ebru Kardan
UMass Amherst

Felicia R. Lundquist
Think Again Training & Consulting

Kevin McAllister
Downtown Northampton Association

Meghan McCormick, PRESIDENT
William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty

Mark NeJame
NeJame & Kling Law Offices

Nanci Newton
The Healing ZONE Therapeutic Massage

Heidi Nortonsmith
Northampton Survival Center

Joanna Olin
Smith College

Isolda Ortega-Bustamante
Collaborative for Educational Svcs.

Russell J. Peotter, EX OFFICIO

Taylor Robbins
UMassFive College Credit Union

Amanda Shafii
CopyCat, Inc.

Elena Sharnoff
B Strategic Communications

October 11, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Via email:

RE: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service (along Route 2)

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

On behalf of the investors (members) of the Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), I write in strong SUPPORT of the Northern Tier Rail Project.

The GNCC is one of the largest and oldest chambers in western Massachusetts and is comprised of nearly 500 investors (members) that create over 10,000 jobs across a diverse group of industries and business categories. The GNCC is also home to the Hampshire County Regional Tourism Council, the official destination marketing organization for Hampshire County, which is responsible for marketing and promoting attractions and services to inspire tourism, convention, travel, and recreation across the 20 communities in Hampshire County. As an involved leader who helped establish and promote north/south rail service, I understand from first-hand experience the economic benefits that result from a robust passenger rail network.

Multi-modal transportation is essential to help communities gain equitable access to economic opportunities and sustainable growth. Northern Tier Rail will help meet these needs and build thriving communities in central and western Massachusetts and the rest of the Commonwealth.

Passenger rail along the Northern Tier would represent a return to the transportation options available to our part of the state from the mid-1800s until 1958. For decades since, the communities along the Northern Tier, or Route 2, have been among the poorest in Massachusetts due to fewer economic opportunities, stagnant or declining population growth, and an aging population.

The Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce

99 Pleasant Street | Northampton, MA 01060 | Office: 413-584-1900 | Fax: 413-584-1934

www.northamptonchamber.com

Small businesses are the major drivers of the local economy in western and central Massachusetts, and the closure of a business can have a significant impact on a community. The loss of manufacturing in the region, coupled with recent and severe economic downturns over the past five years, have caused Northern Tier communities to struggle to even more. The return of passenger rail service along the Northern Tier will help strengthen economies and boost opportunities for growth.

As a Commonwealth, we should encourage more balanced and sustainable population growth across the state. The historic passage of the Affordable Homes Act and a commitment to affordable housing in central and western Massachusetts are the starting points and basis for expanding passenger rail service along the Northern Tier. Providing the transportation mobility necessary will help relieve housing pressures that urban, eastern counterparts are currently facing. Northern Tier rail service will increase access to central and western Massachusetts and allow people in the region to travel more easily to points east, south, and west.

We believe north/south rail service through Northampton and Hampshire County has been a contributing factor to the economic impact experienced from tourism and visitation. Based on the most recent available economic impact data (FY22), domestic visitor spending in Hampshire County was \$159MM (up +22%). This generated \$49MM in state and local taxes (up +20%) and supported nearly 950 jobs (up +15%). Latest U.S. Census data (2020) showed population growth of 3.6% in Northampton and 2.7% in Hampshire County. According to the UMass Donahue Institute, in 2022, job growth was 2.0% in Northampton and 4.3% in Hampshire County. The key indicators of a strong local economy reflect improved access into the region.

The limitation of transportation options along the Northern Tier makes it more difficult for the Commonwealth to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is nearly impossible to reduce single occupant vehicle trips when the Route 2 corridor does not have multi-modal transit options.

Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for underserved communities along its path to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs; expand economic opportunity, growth, and mobility; assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand; and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Please prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent D. Jackson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vincent D. Jackson
Executive Director

cc:

andrew.m.koziol@dot.state.ma.gov

gus.p.bickford@dot.state.ma.us

daniel.j.racicot@dot.state.ma.gov

jo.comerford@masenate.gov



October 12, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Secretary and CEO
Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
David Mohler, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt, Administrator Slesinger, and Executive Director Mohler:

The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, representing a diverse range of industries—including education, construction, retail, hospitality, and lodging—strongly supports the Northern Tier Rail Project.

For the Commonwealth to flourish, it is vital that all communities have equitable access to opportunities for growth and economic development. Multi-modal transportation is key to unlocking these opportunities, particularly in enhancing tourism and fostering economic vitality. The Northern Tier Rail Project will not only meet the needs of central and western Massachusetts but also bolster tourism and economic growth across the region.

As a hub for education and culture, Amherst is home to esteemed institutions such as the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst College, and Hampshire College. Improved rail connectivity will facilitate easier access for students, faculty, and visitors, enhancing academic collaboration and cultural exchange. This accessibility is crucial for attracting top talent and maintaining our institutions' competitive edge.

Moreover, our local businesses stand to benefit immensely. Enhanced rail service will draw more visitors to our area, increasing patronage of restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues. For the hospitality and lodging sectors, this means higher occupancy rates and the potential for expansion, leading to job creation and economic growth. Construction companies will find new opportunities in infrastructure development and related projects, further stimulating the local economy.

The limitation of transportation options in our region also poses challenges to achieving the Commonwealth's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Expanding passenger rail service provides a sustainable alternative to single-occupancy vehicle travel, contributing to environmental preservation and aligning with statewide commitments to combat climate change.

Ultimately, the Northern Tier Rail will be the catalyst needed for our underserved region to attract younger individuals, families, and entrepreneurs. It will expand economic opportunity, enhance mobility, assist in meeting the Commonwealth's pressing housing demand by making our region more accessible, and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

We urge you to prioritize and commit to making Northern Tier passenger rail a reality. Your leadership in advancing this project will have a lasting positive impact on our community and the Commonwealth as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warm regards,

Jacob Robinson
Executive Director
Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce
35 South Pleasant Street
Amherst, MA 01002
Phone: (413) 253-0700
Email: director@amherstarea.com
www.amherstarea.com

MassDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary**Draft Final Report – Public Comment Letter Responses**

Project Name: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Description: Evaluation of passenger rail alternatives along the Northern Tier Corridor of western Massachusetts.

Comment

Name: Lynn Griesemer

Affiliation: Town of Amherst

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Gregory Snedeker

Affiliation: Town of Gill

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Michelle Schutt
Affiliation: Greenfield Community College

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Scott Bastarache
Affiliation: Town of Erving

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Jennifer Schantz
Affiliation: The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

MassDOT Response:

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Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Brian Hargrove
Affiliation: Northfield Mount Hermon

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Javier Reyes
Affiliation: University of Massachusetts Amherst

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Glenn Eaton

Affiliation: Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your support for Alternative 3 and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Comment

Name: Barry Roberts

Affiliation: Amherst Business Improvement District

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Len Bedaw

Affiliation: Orange Municipal Airport

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Jodi Stack and Michael Knapik

Affiliation: Baystate Health

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Roy Nascimento and Travis Condon

Affiliation: North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Ed Wingenbach

Affiliation: Hampshire College

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Danielle Holley
Affiliation: Mount Holyoke College

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Linda Dunlavy
Affiliation: Franklin Regional Council of Governments

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Jane Wald
Affiliation: Emily Dickinson Museum

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Hannah Rechtschaffen

Affiliation: Greenfield Business Association

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name: Thomas Matuszko

Affiliation: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

The recommended next steps included in Chapter 6 aim to continue enhancing regional mobility and connectivity.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name:

Senator Jo Comerford, Senator Paul Mark, Senator John Cronin, Senator Jamie Eldridge, Representative Natalie Blais, Representative John Barrett, Representative Mindy Domb, Representation Susannah Whipps, and Representative Jon Zlotnik

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity, support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, and minimize impacts on public health and the environment from transportation, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

The recommended next steps included in Chapter 6 aim to continue enhancing regional mobility and connectivity.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name:

Vincent Jackson

Affiliation:

The Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Comment

Name:

Jacob Robinson

Affiliation:

Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce

MassDOT Response:

Thank you for your comment and support for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study.

Your letter highlights the need to promote transportation equity and support economic development along the Northern Tier corridor, which were goals of this effort and guided the development of the intercity rail service alternatives.

We appreciate your engagement.

Appendix B

Federal Railroad Administration Grade Crossing Inventory

Crossing ID	Milepost	Municipality	Street	Highway Type	Number of Tracks	Warning Type	Quiet Zone
970951C	0.83	SOMERVILLE	BET FL Ped East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970952J	0.87	SOMERVILLE	BET FL Ped Ctr	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
921763E	1.03	SOMERVILLE	Yard 14 Crossing	Private	2	Active	
052304J	2.68	SOMERVILLE	Park Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052313H	4.16	CAMBRIDGE	Sherman Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052315W	5.56	BELMONT	Brighton Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
970894R	6.39	BELMONT	Belmont MW	Private	2	Passive	
052321A	8.35	WALTHAM	Beaver Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052325C	9.84	WALTHAM	Elm Street	Local	1	Active	Yes
052326J	9.95	WALTHAM	Moody Street	Local	1	Active	Yes
970896E	11.31	WALTHAM	Brandeis East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970897L	11.45	WALTHAM	Brandeis West	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052328X	11.49	WALTHAM	South Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052332M	13.18	WESTON	Church Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
970898T	13.21	WESTON	Kendall Green Platform	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052334B	13.77	WESTON	Viles Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052335H	14.34	WESTON	Conant Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
052337W	15.59	LINCOLN	Tower Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
052338D	15.97	LINCOLN	Old Sudbury Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
052339K	16.01	LINCOLN	South Great Road	State	2	Active	Yes
970899A	16.63	LINCOLN	Lincoln Station IB East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970900S	16.65	LINCOLN	Lincoln Station IB West	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052340E	16.71	LINCOLN	Lincoln Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
052344G	20.00	CONCORD	Sudbury Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
970901Y	20.08	CONCORD	Concord Station East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970902F	20.09	CONCORD	Concord Station Center	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970903M	20.11	CONCORD	Concord Station West	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052345N	20.16	CONCORD	Belknap Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052348J	21.60	CONCORD	Baker Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
977284G	21.90	CONCORD	Bruce Freeman Trail	Pedestrian	2	Active	
970904U	21.92	CONCORD	W Concord Pedestrian East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970958A	21.96	CONCORD	W Concord Pedestrian West	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052349R	22.00	CONCORD	Commonwealth Avenue	Local	2	Active	Yes
052350K	22.48	CONCORD	Conant Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052352Y	24.13	ACTON	Parker Street	Local	2	Active	Yes

Crossing ID	Milepost	Municipality	Street	Highway Type	Number of Tracks	Warning Type	Quiet Zone
052354M	25.54	ACTON	Martin Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052355U	26.02	ACTON	Central Street East	Local	2	Active	Yes
052356B	26.80	ACTON	Massachusetts Avenue	State	2	Active	Yes
052357H	26.84	ACTON	Arlington Street	Local	2	Active	Yes
052358P	27.30	ACTON	Central Street West	Local	2	Active	Yes
052360R	28.15	BOXBOROUGH	Sargent Street	Local	2	Active	
052361X	28.94	BOXBOROUGH	Depot Road	Local	2	Active	
052363L	30.10	LITTLETON	Foster Street	Local	2	Active	
052366G	31.50	LITTLETON	King Street	Local	2	Active	
052368V	33.50	AYER	Willows Road	Local	2	Active	
052369C	34.50	AYER	Snake Hill Road	Local	2	Active	Yes
052370W	34.95	AYER	Sandy Pond Road	Local	2	Active	
052371D	35.50	AYER	Groton-Harvard Road	Local	2	Active	
970905B	36.04	AYER	Ayer Station East	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
970906H	36.07	AYER	Ayer Station West	Pedestrian	3	Passive	
970907P	36.11	AYER	Ayer Tower	Pedestrian	3	Passive	
052377U	37.50	SHIRLEY	Walker Road	Local	2	Active	
052378B	38.00	SHIRLEY	Patterson Road	Local	2	Active	
052380C	39.30	SHIRLEY	Phoenix Street	Local	2	Active	
052381J	39.46	SHIRLEY	Main Street	Local	2	Active	
052382R	39.59	SHIRLEY	Center Road	Local	2	Active	
052383X	40.16	SHIRLEY	Catacunemaug Road	Local	2	Active	
970908W	45.23	LEOMINSTER	North Leominster Station	Pedestrian	2	Passive	
052425G	75.20	ROYALSTON	Baldwinville Road	State	2	Active	
052435M	85.97	ORANGE	Mill St East	Local	1	Active	
052436U	86.13	ORANGE	Mill St West	Local	1	Active	
052437B	86.35	ORANGE	Water Street	Local	1	Active	
052443E	90.74	ERVING	Waste Treatment	Local	2	Active	
052445T	93.54	WENDELL	Farley Road	Local	2	Active	
052448N	99.54	MONTAGUE	Lake Pleasant Road	Local	2	Active	
052470B	109.70	DEERFIELD	Chapman Road	Private	1	Passive	
052472P	113.67	CONWAY	Bardwells Ferry Road	Local	1	Active	
052473W	116.10	CONWAY	Power Co. Access Road	Private	1	Passive	
052474D	118.07	BUCKLAND	South Conway Road	Local	1	Active	
052475K	118.44	BUCKLAND	Elm Street	Local	2	Active	
052476S	118.73	BUCKLAND	Ashfield Street	Local	2	Active	
052483C	128.92	CHARLEMONT	Tower Road	Local	2	Active	

Crossing ID	Milepost	Municipality	Street	Highway Type	Number of Tracks	Warning Type	Quiet Zone
052486X	135.00	CHARLEMONT	Tunnel Road	Local	2	Passive	
052487E	135.65	FLORIDA	River Road	Local	1	Active	
052497K	144.50	NORTH ADAMS	Protection Ave.	Local	1	Active	
052499Y	144.95	NORTH ADAMS	Sewage Plant	Private	1	Passive	
052500R	145.44	NORTH ADAMS	Ashton Ave.	Local	1	Active	
052504T	148.27	WILLIAMSTOWN	Moore's Crossing	Private	1	Active	

Appendix C

Environmental Resource Maps

Environmental Justice Communities
Environmental Resources
FEMA Floodplain
Historic Properties
Protected Open Space
Wetland Resource Areas

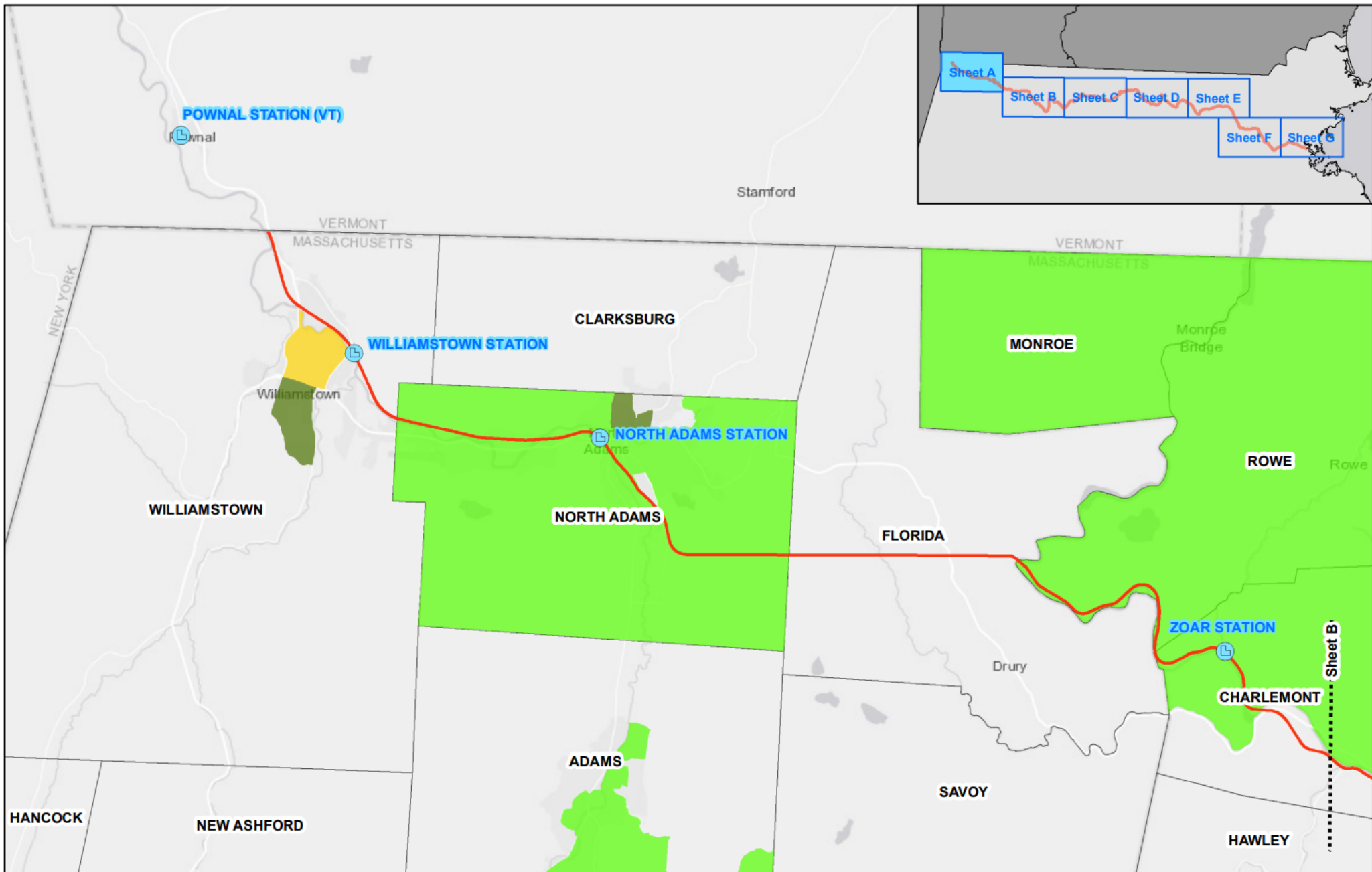
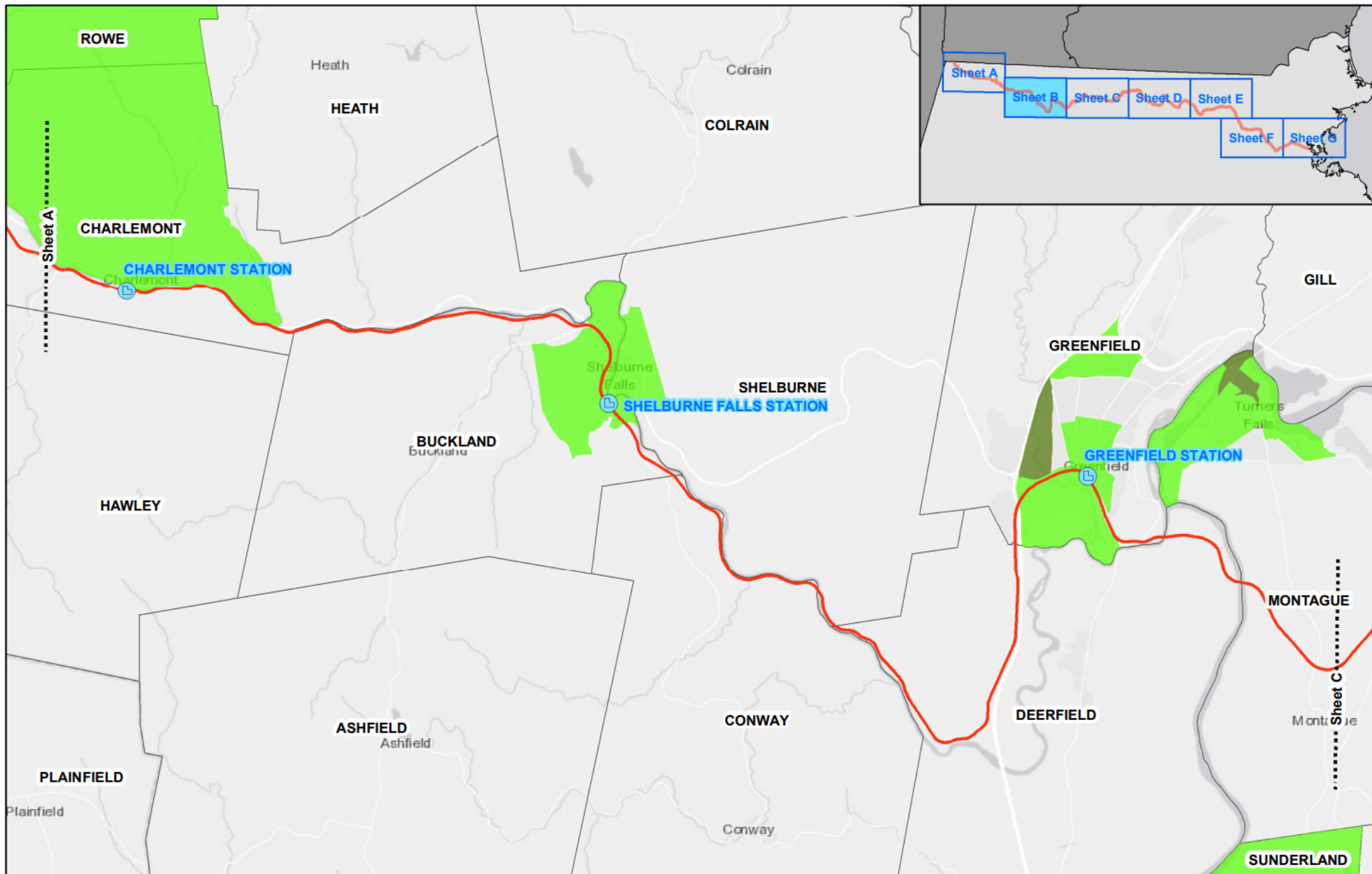


Figure 1
Sheet A



Boston, MA

March 2022



Environmental Justice Communities

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 1

Sheet B

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities EJ Criteria

- Minority
- Income
- English isolation

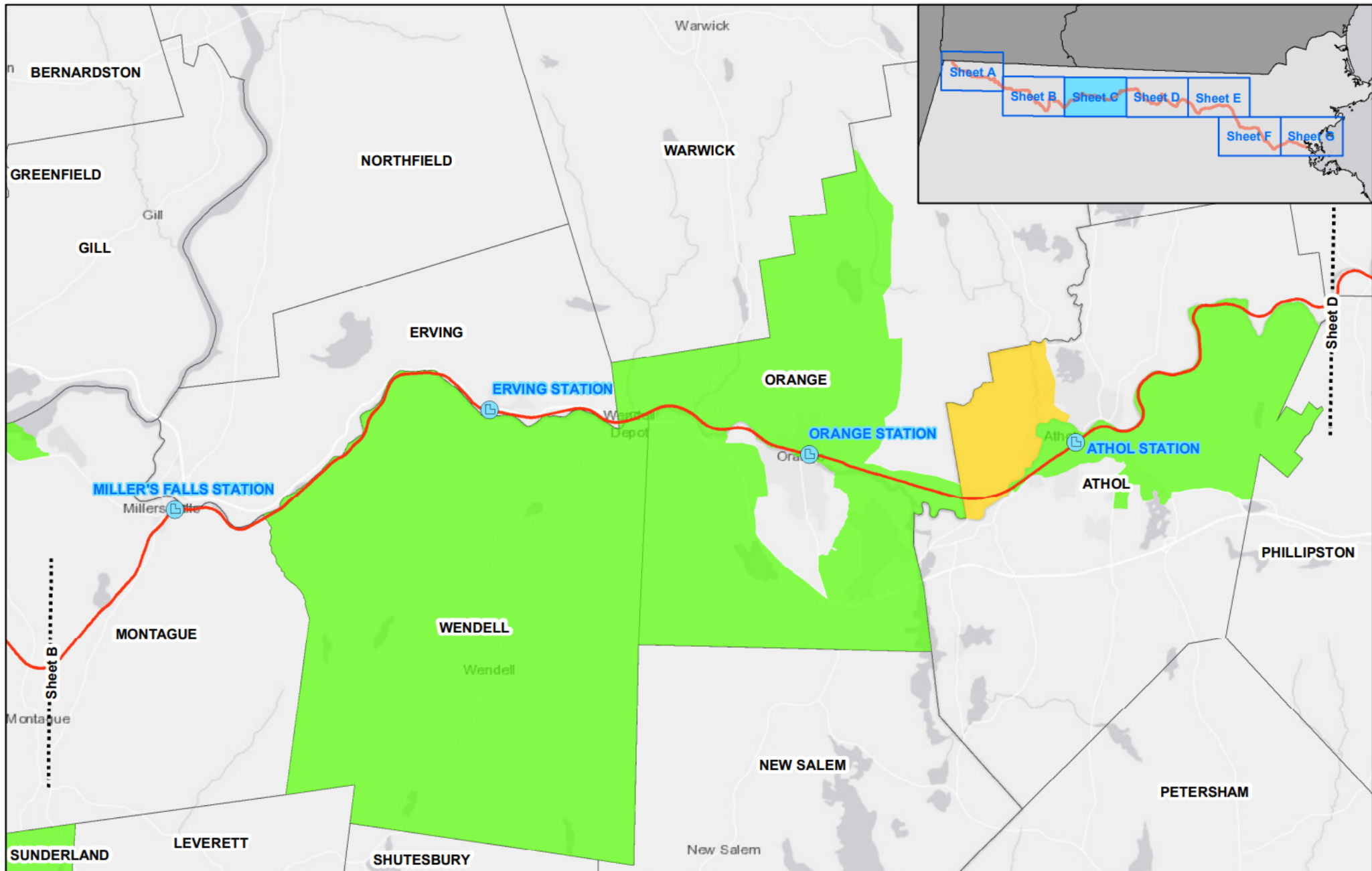
2020 Environmental Justice Communities

- Minority and Income
- Minority and English isolation
- Income and English isolation
- Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Environmental Justice Communities
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 1
Sheet C



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities

EJ Criteria

Minority

Income

English isolation

Minority and Income

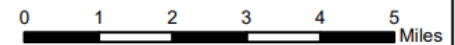
Minority and English isolation

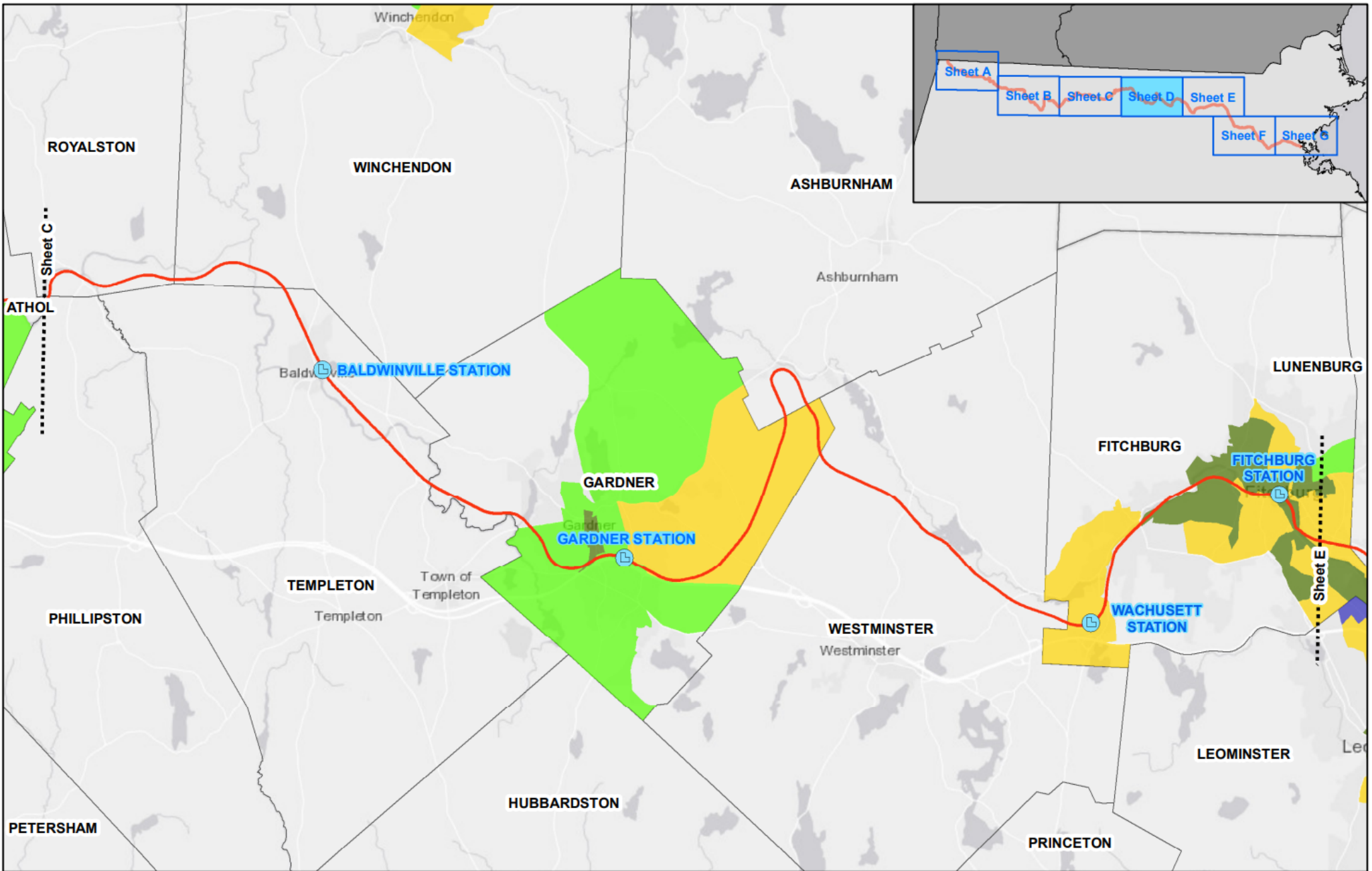
Income and English isolation

Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.





Environmental Justice Communities

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 1

Sheet D

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities

EJ Criteria

- Minority
- Income
- English isolation

Legend

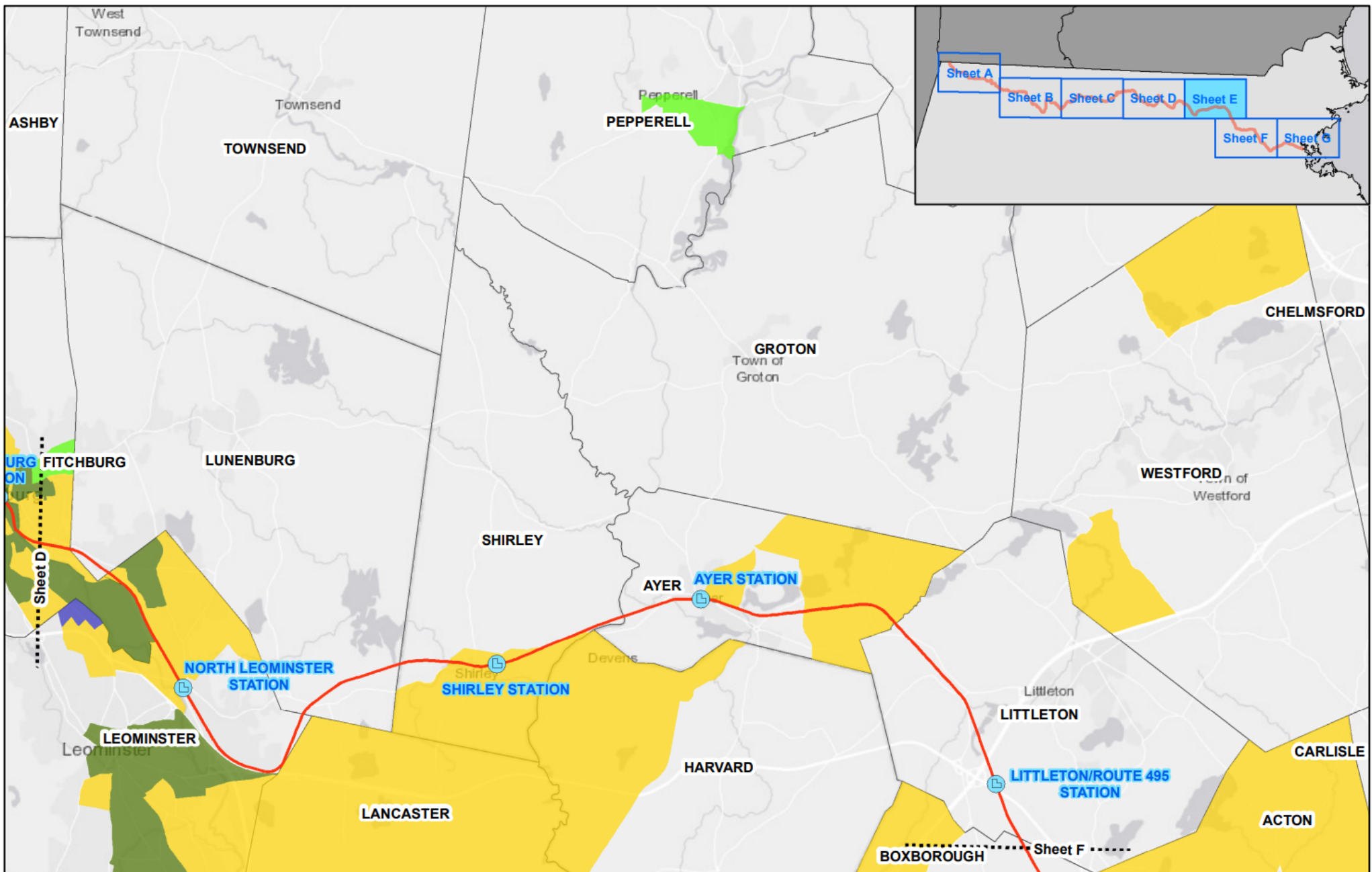
- Minority and Income
- Minority and English isolation
- Income and English isolation
- Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

N



Environmental Justice Communities
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 1
Sheet E



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities

EJ Criteria

Minority

Income

English isolation

Minority and Income

Minority and English isolation

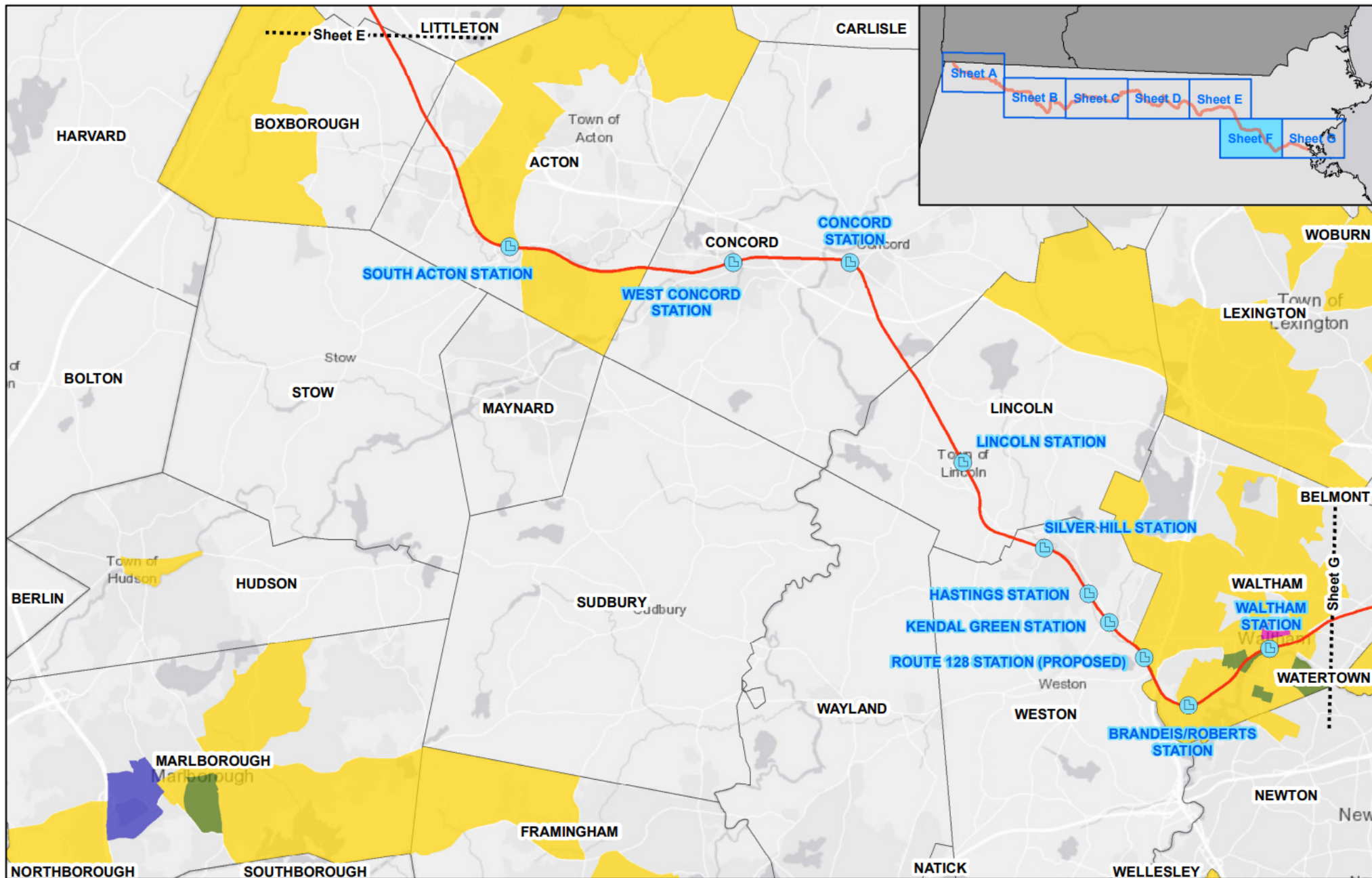
Income and English isolation

Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5
Miles





Environmental Justice Communities
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities

EJ Criteria

Minority

Income

English isolation

Minority and Income

Minority and English isolation

Income and English isolation

Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 1

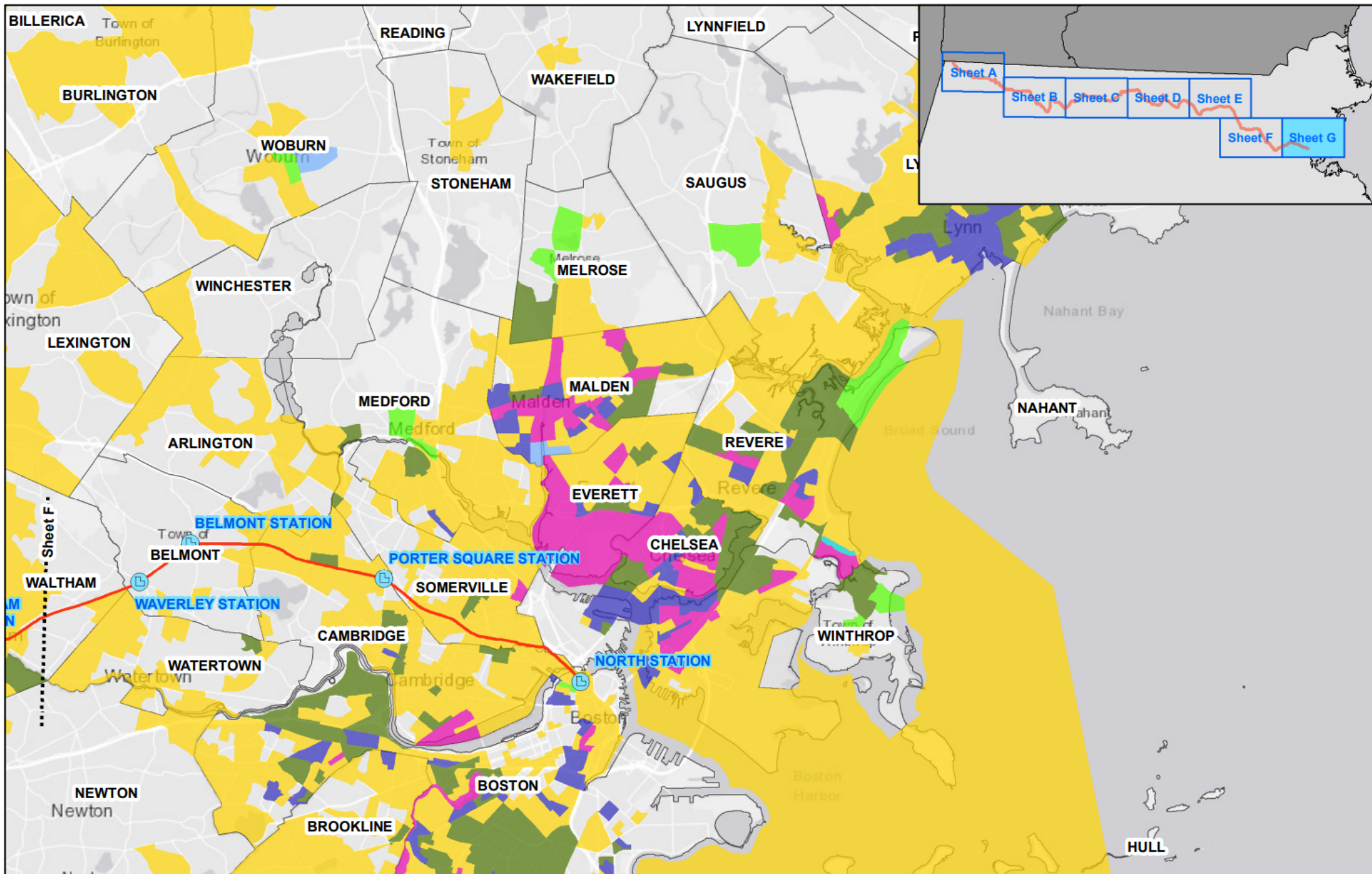
Sheet F

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Environmental Justice Communities
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

2020 Environmental Justice Communities

EJ Criteria

Minority

Income

English isolation

Minority and Income

Minority and English isolation

Income and English isolation

Minority, Income and English isolation

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 1

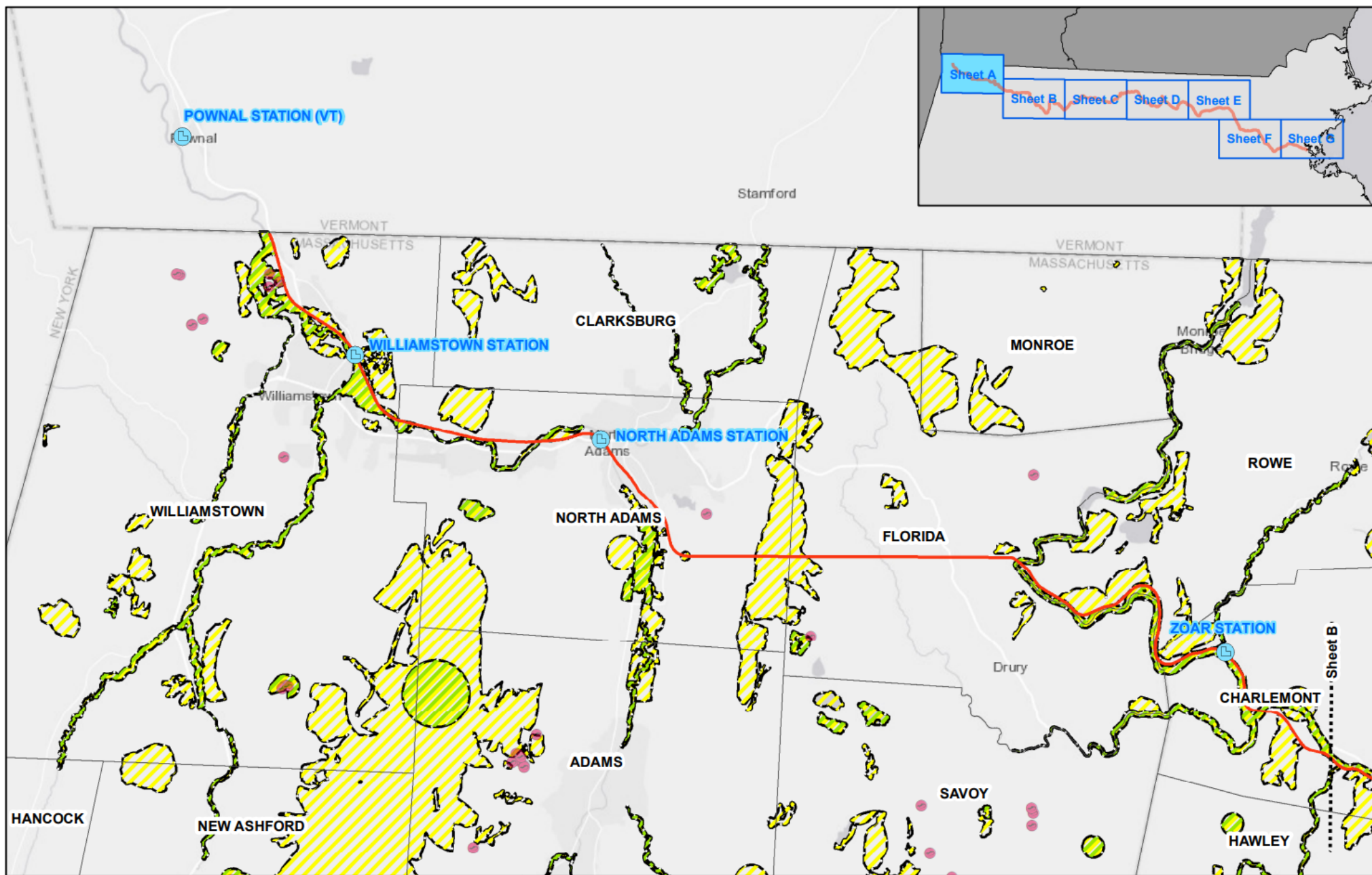
Sheet G

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Environmental Resources Map
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Certified Vernal Pool
- Ⓛ Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- NHESP Estimated Habitat
- NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

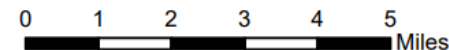
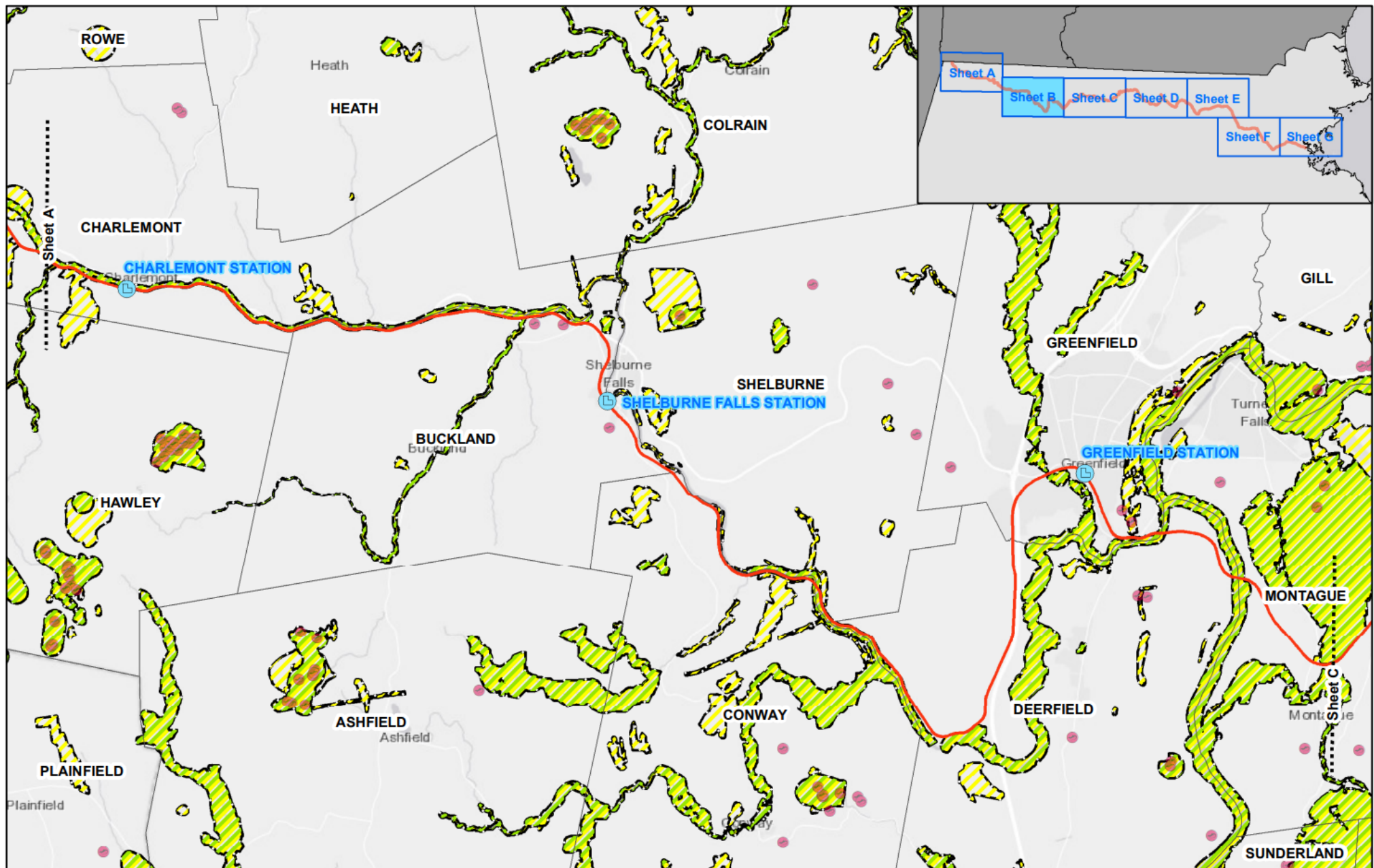


Figure 4
Sheet A



Boston, MA

March 2022



Environmental Resources Map
MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Certified Vernal Pool
- Ⓛ Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- NHESP Estimated Habitat
- NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

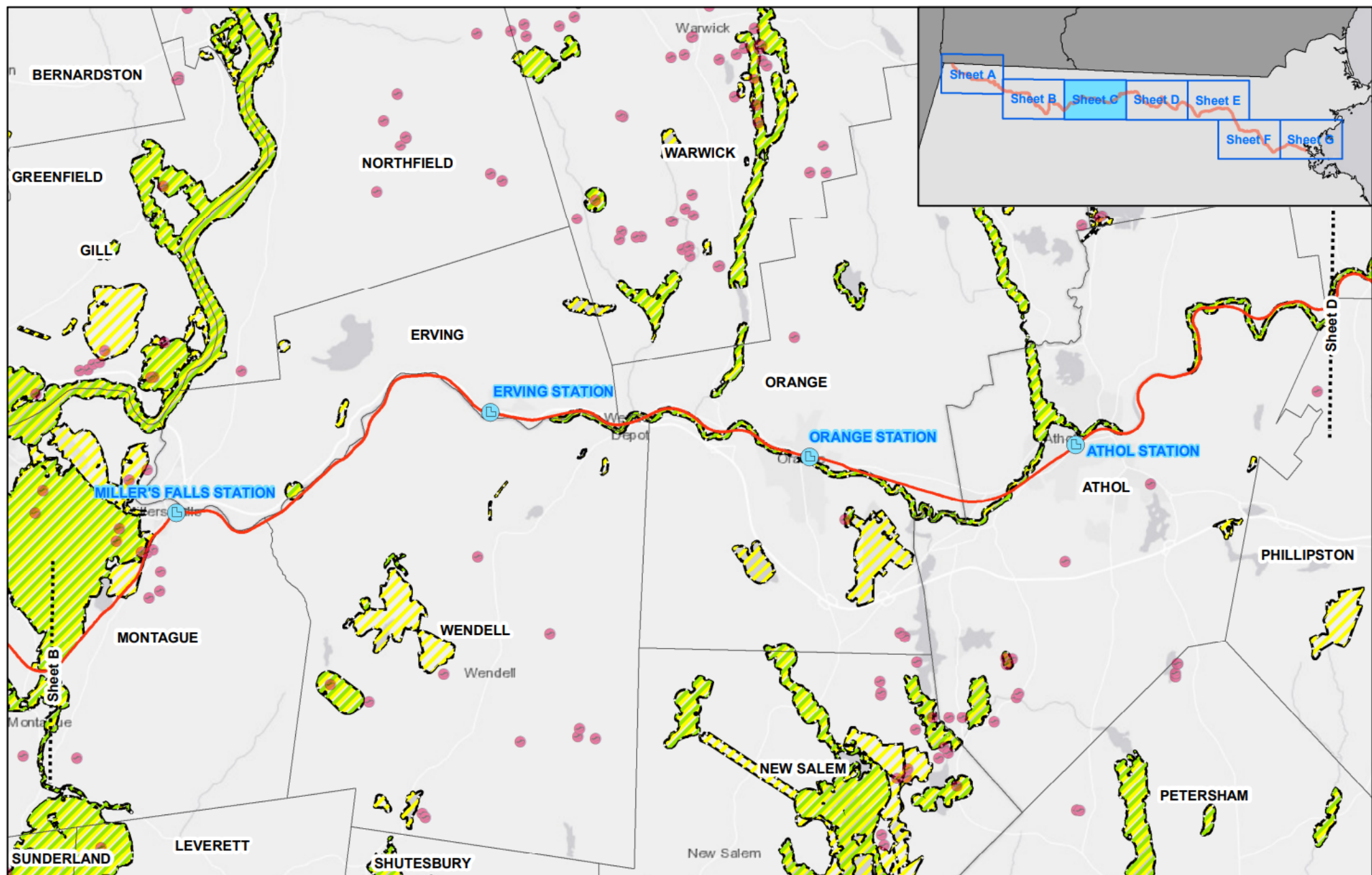


Figure 4
Sheet B



Boston, MA

March 2022



Environmental Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 4

Sheet C



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

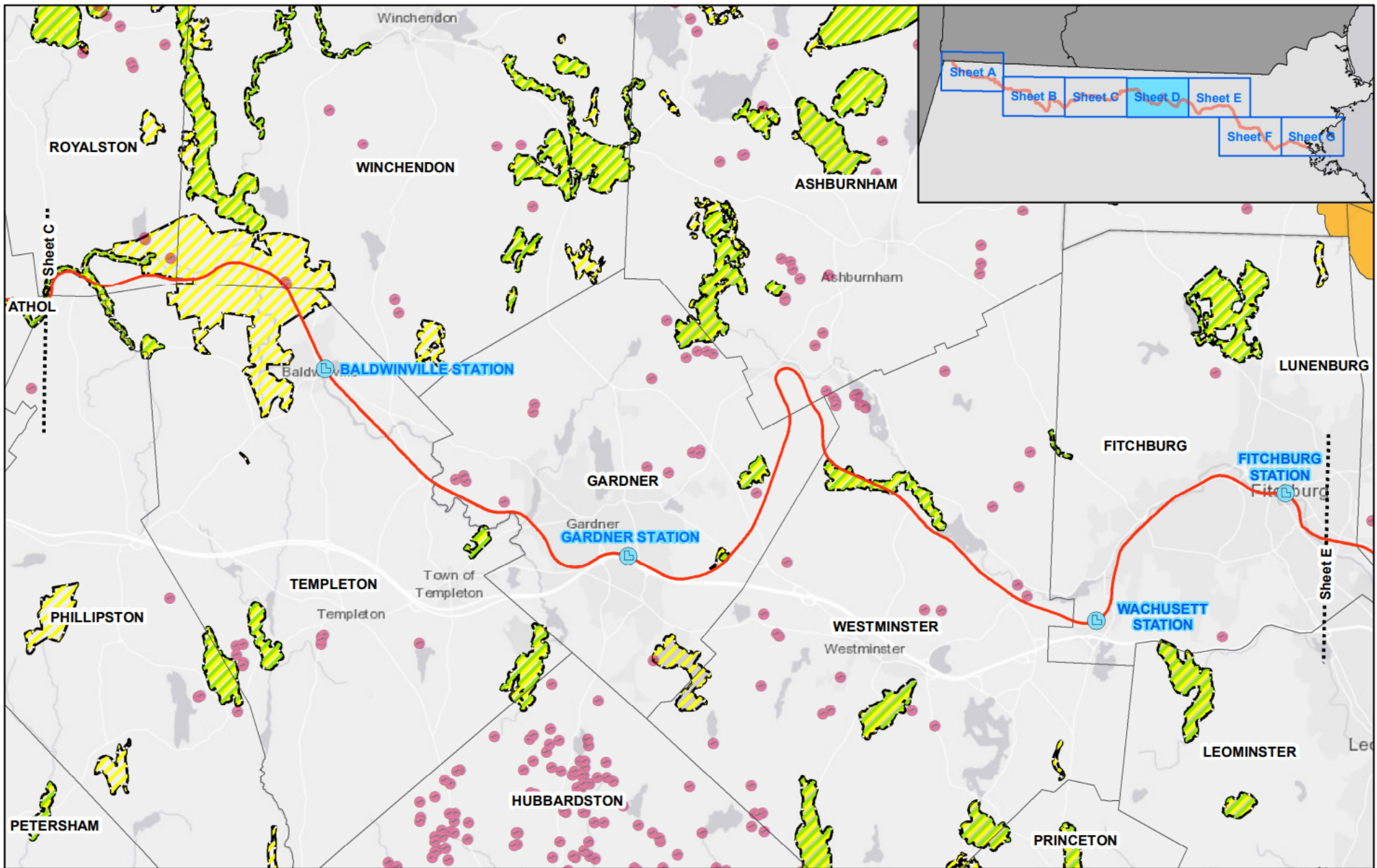
- Certified Vernal Pool
- Ⓛ Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- NHESP Estimated Habitat
- NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Note:

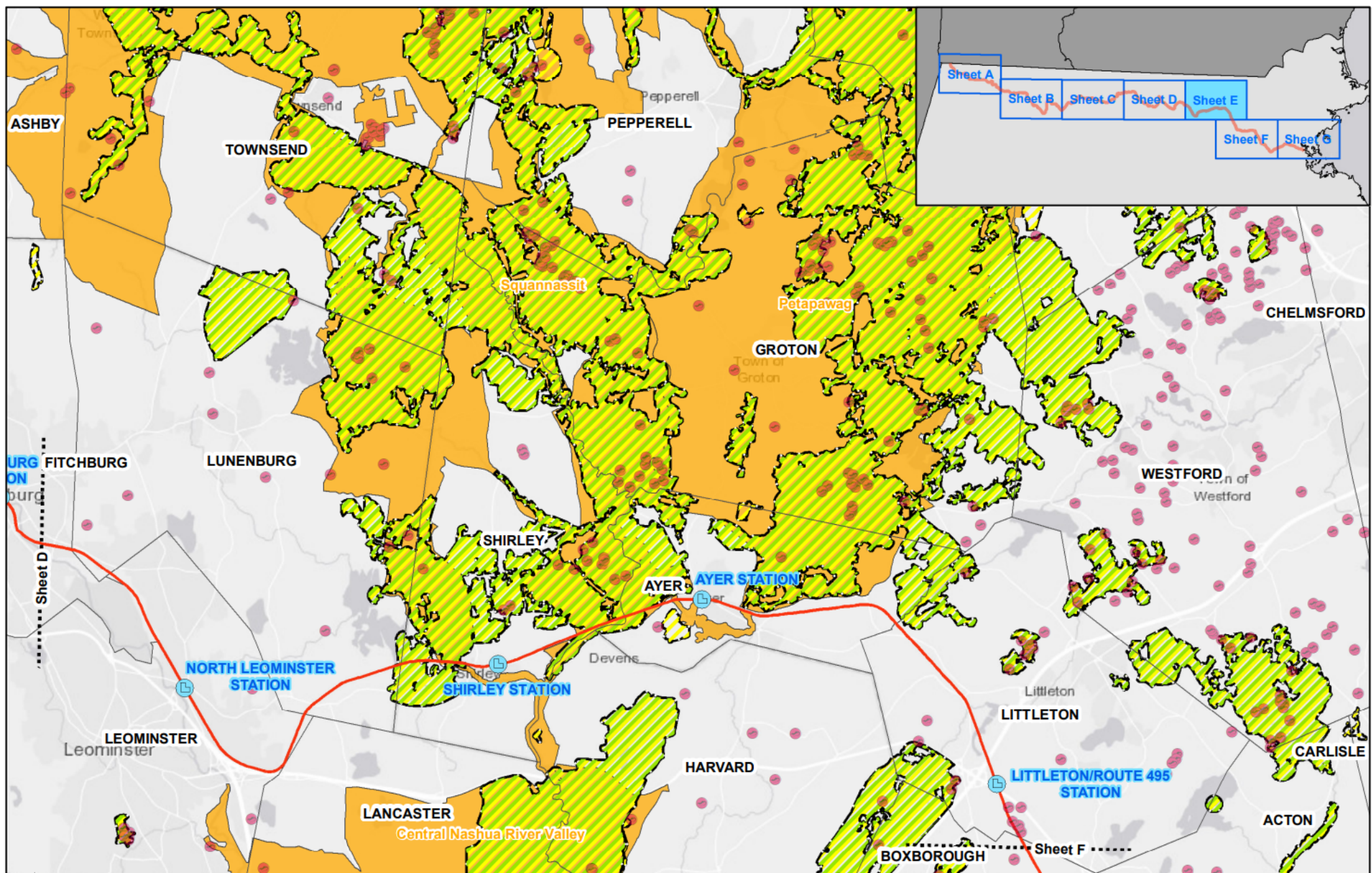
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Environmental Resources Map MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study		Legend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Certified Vernal Pool Ⓛ Rail Station — Chapter 91 Jurisdiction — OTS Northern Tier Railline □ Town Boundary ▨ NHESP Estimated Habitat ▨ NHESP Priority Habitat ■ Outstanding Resource Water ■ Areas of Critical Environmental Concern 	
Figure 4 Sheet D		Note: - The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.	0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
Boston, MA		March 2022	



Environmental Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Certified Vernal Pool
- Ⓛ Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- ▨ NHESP Estimated Habitat
- ▨ NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



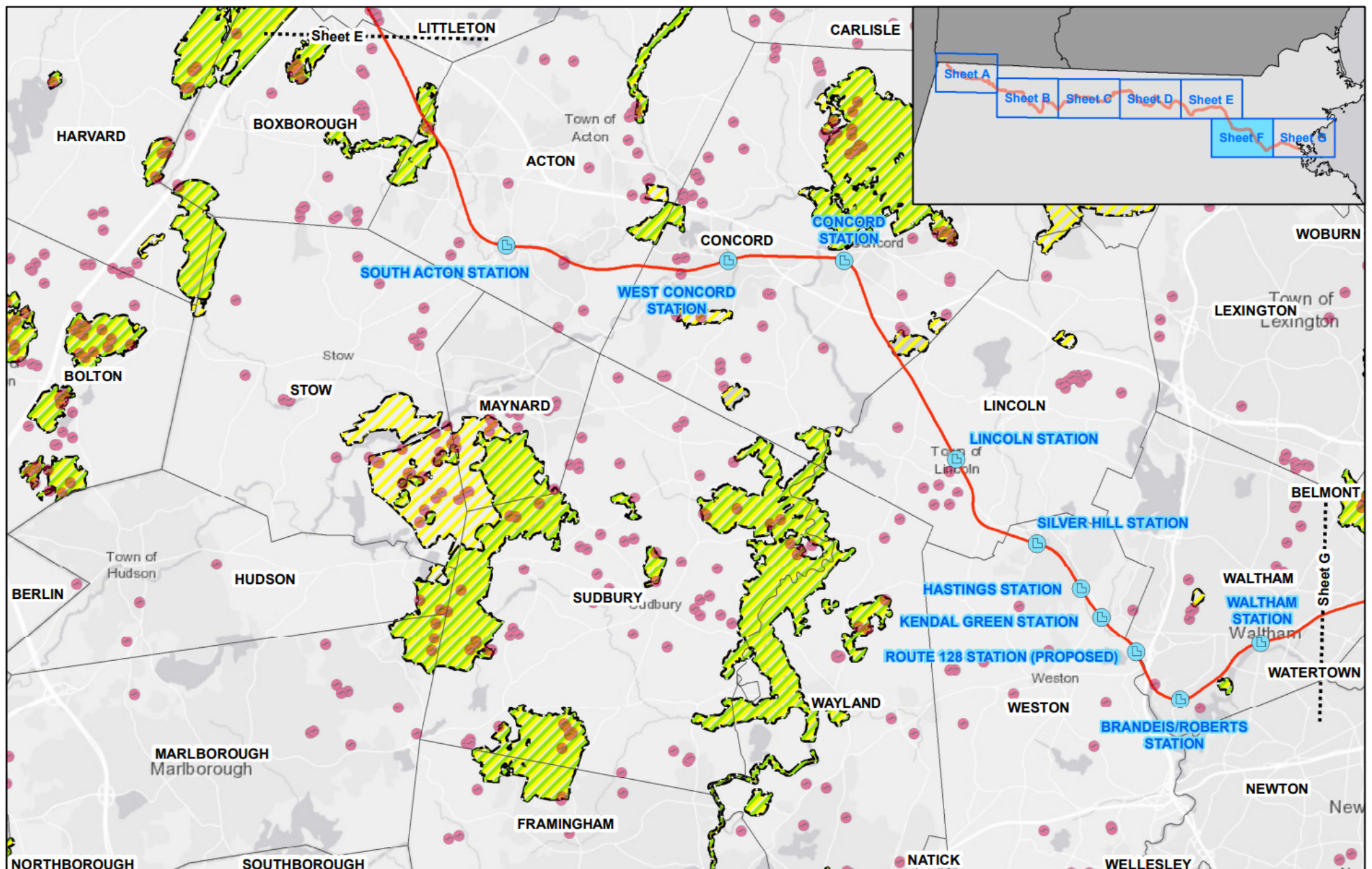
Figure 4

Sheet E

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Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022



Environmental Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Certified Vernal Pool
- L Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- NHESP Estimated Habitat
- NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



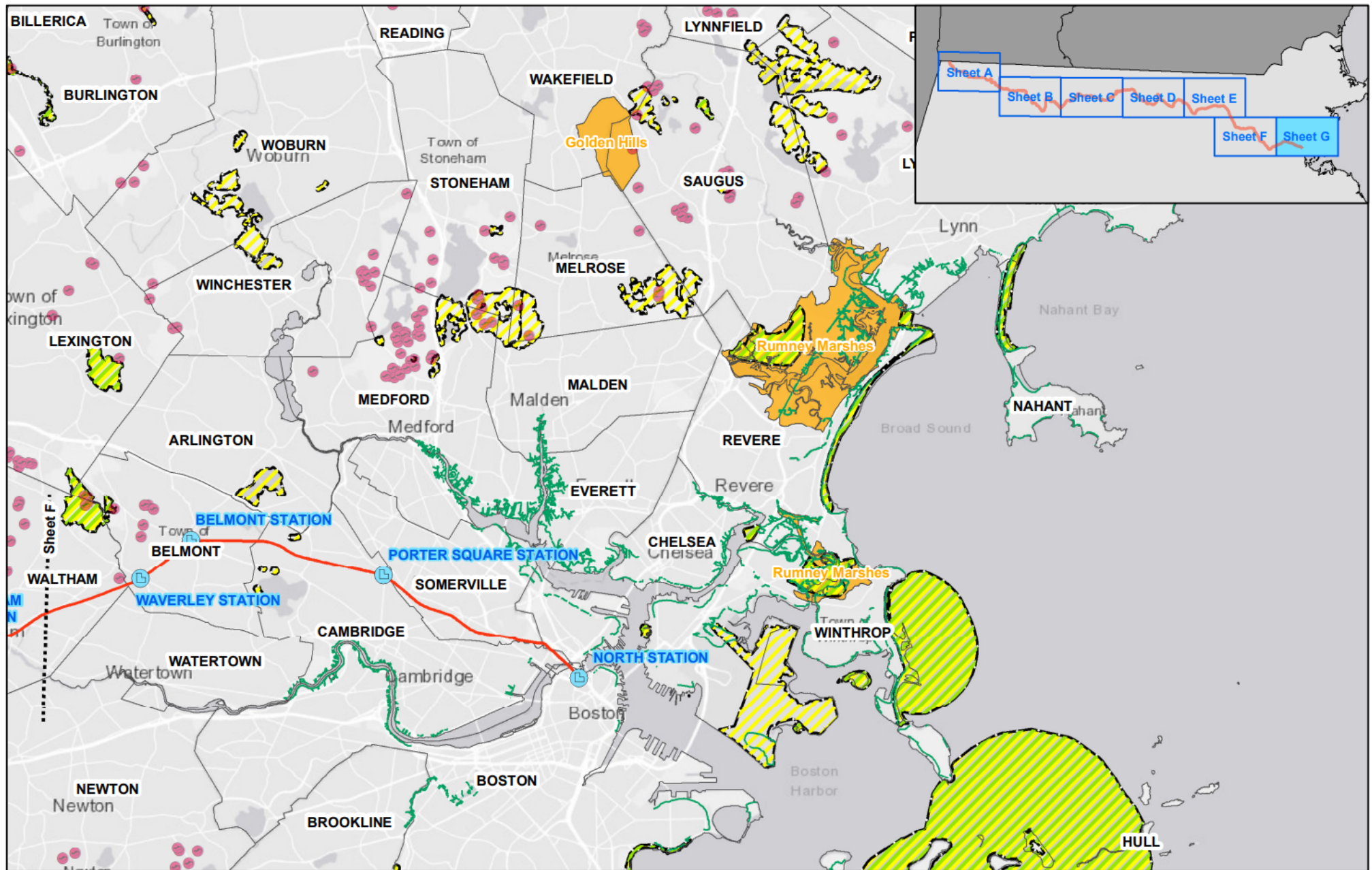
Figure 4

Sheet F

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022



Environmental Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 4

Sheet G

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

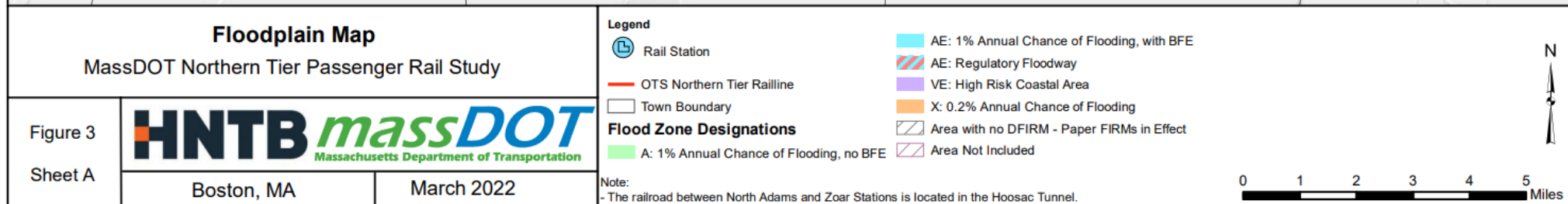
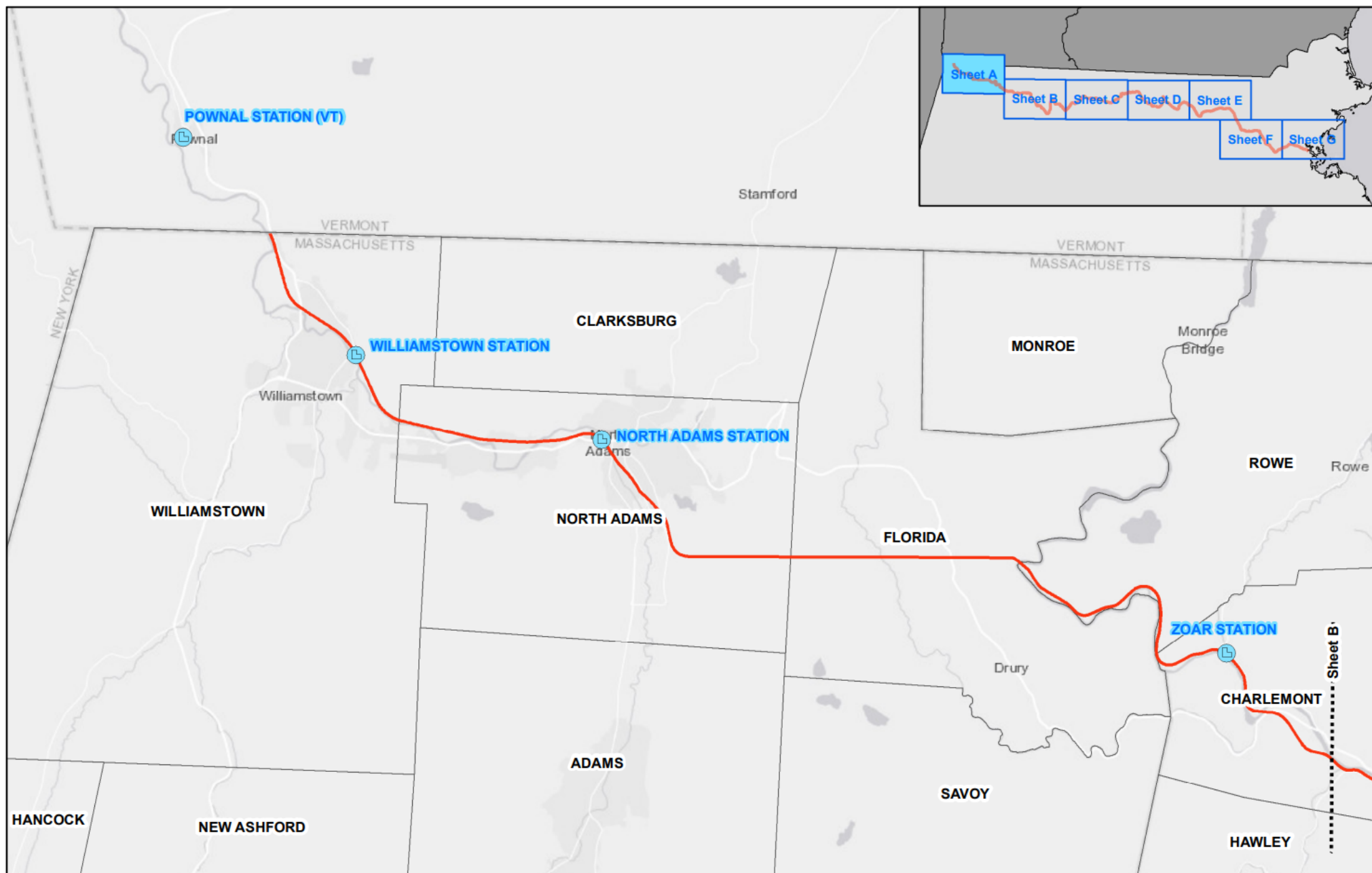
- Certified Vernal Pool
- Ⓛ Rail Station
- Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Town Boundary
- NHESP Estimated Habitat
- NHESP Priority Habitat
- Outstanding Resource Water
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

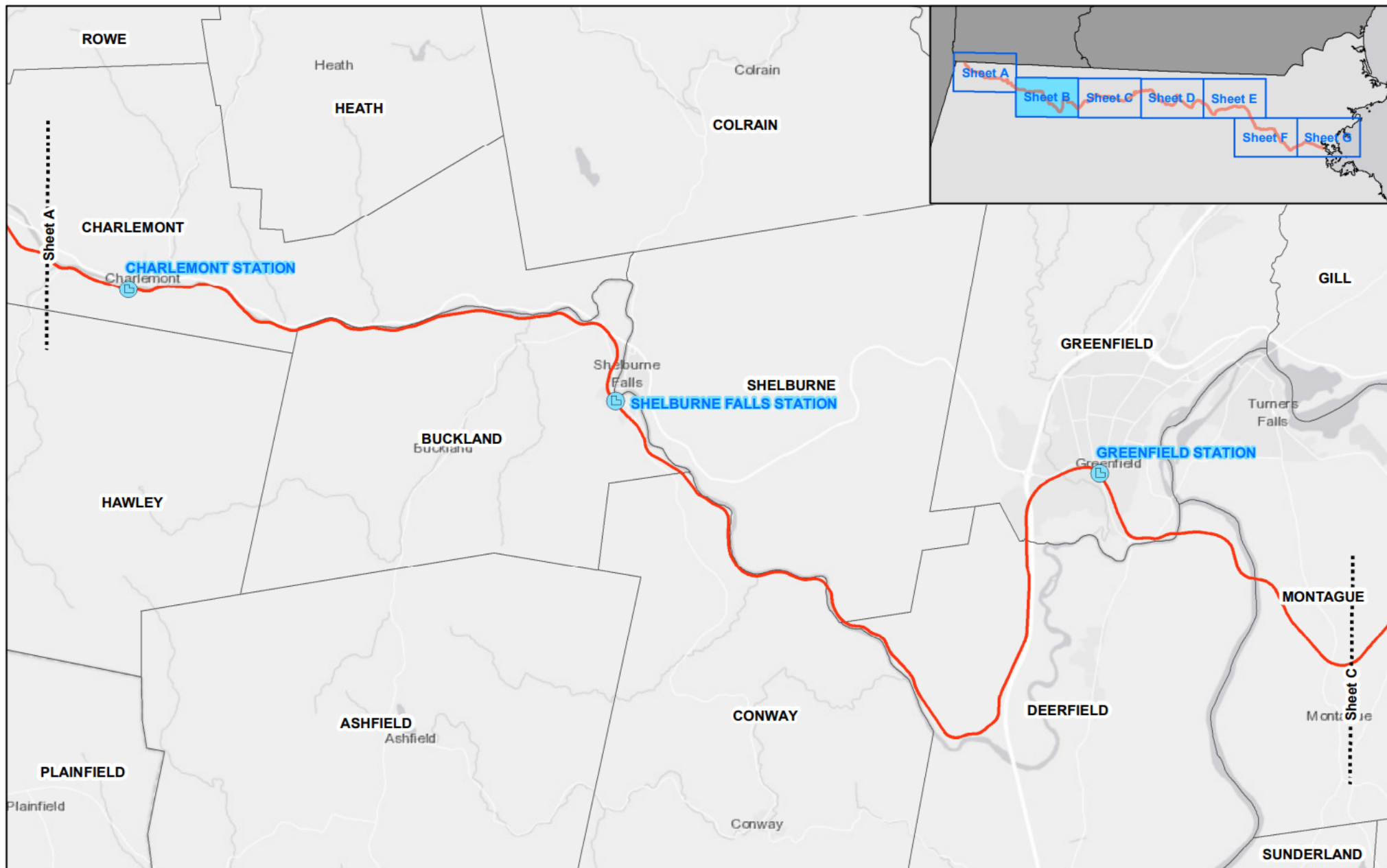
Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles







Floodplain Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 3

Sheet B



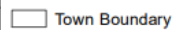
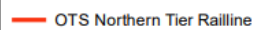
Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend



Rail Station



OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

Flood Zone Designations



Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE

AE: Regulatory Floodway

VE: High Risk Coastal Area

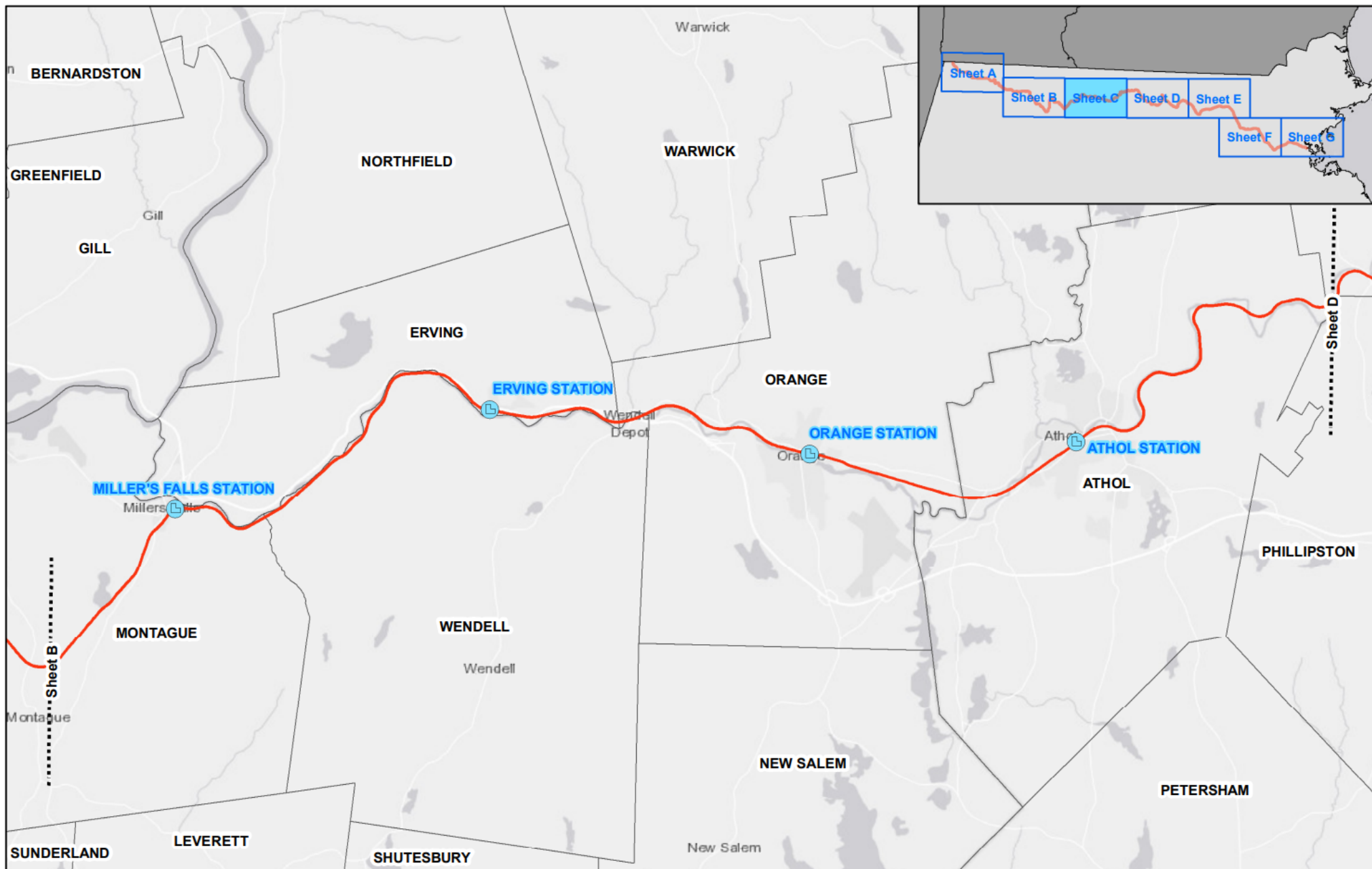
X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect

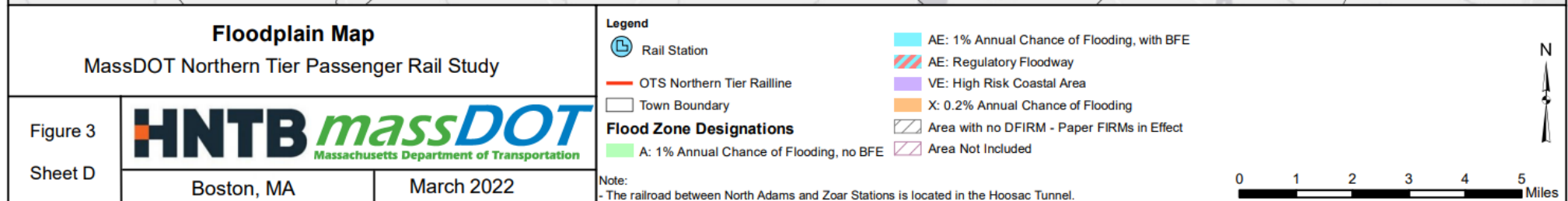
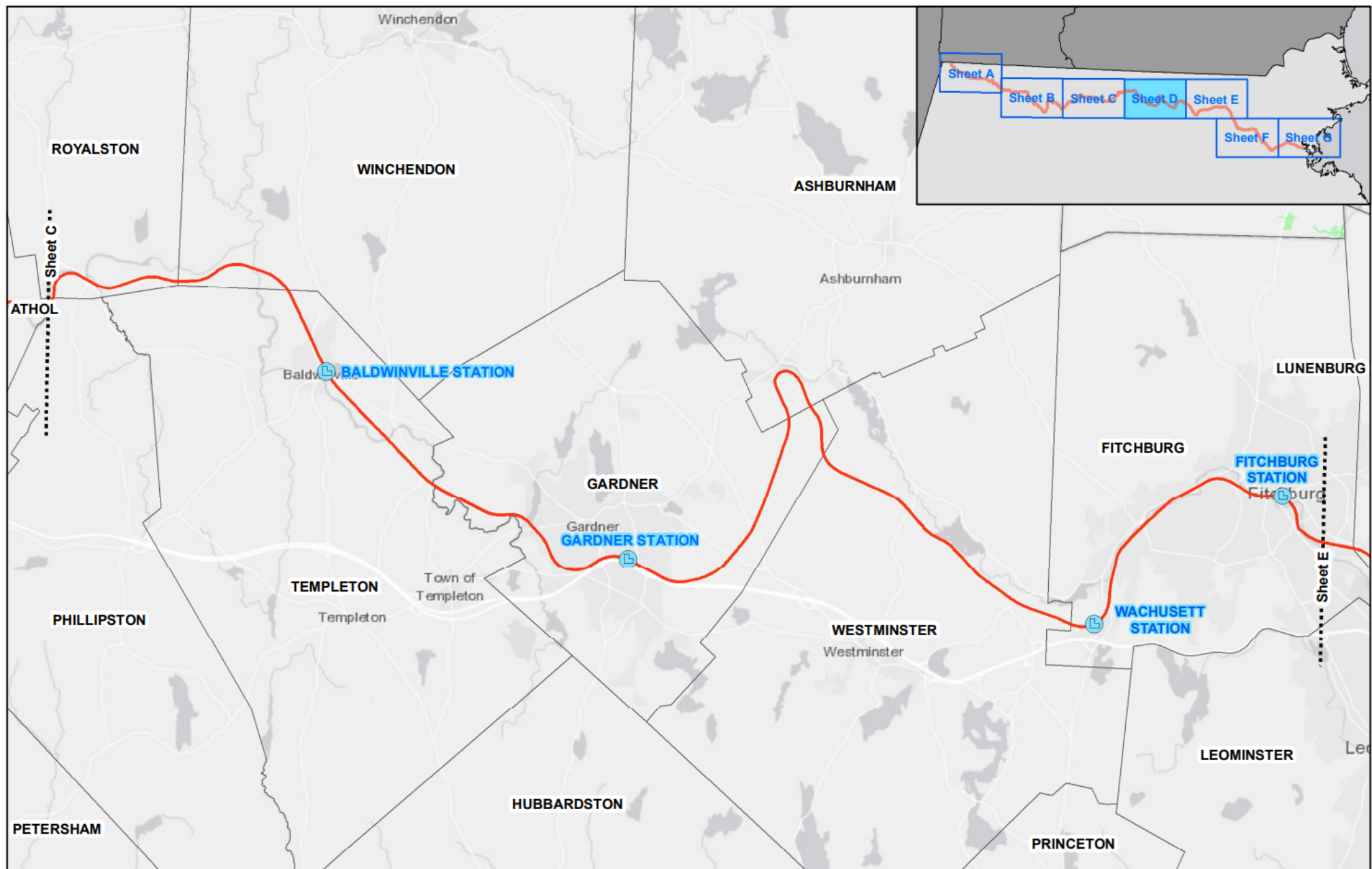
Area Not Included

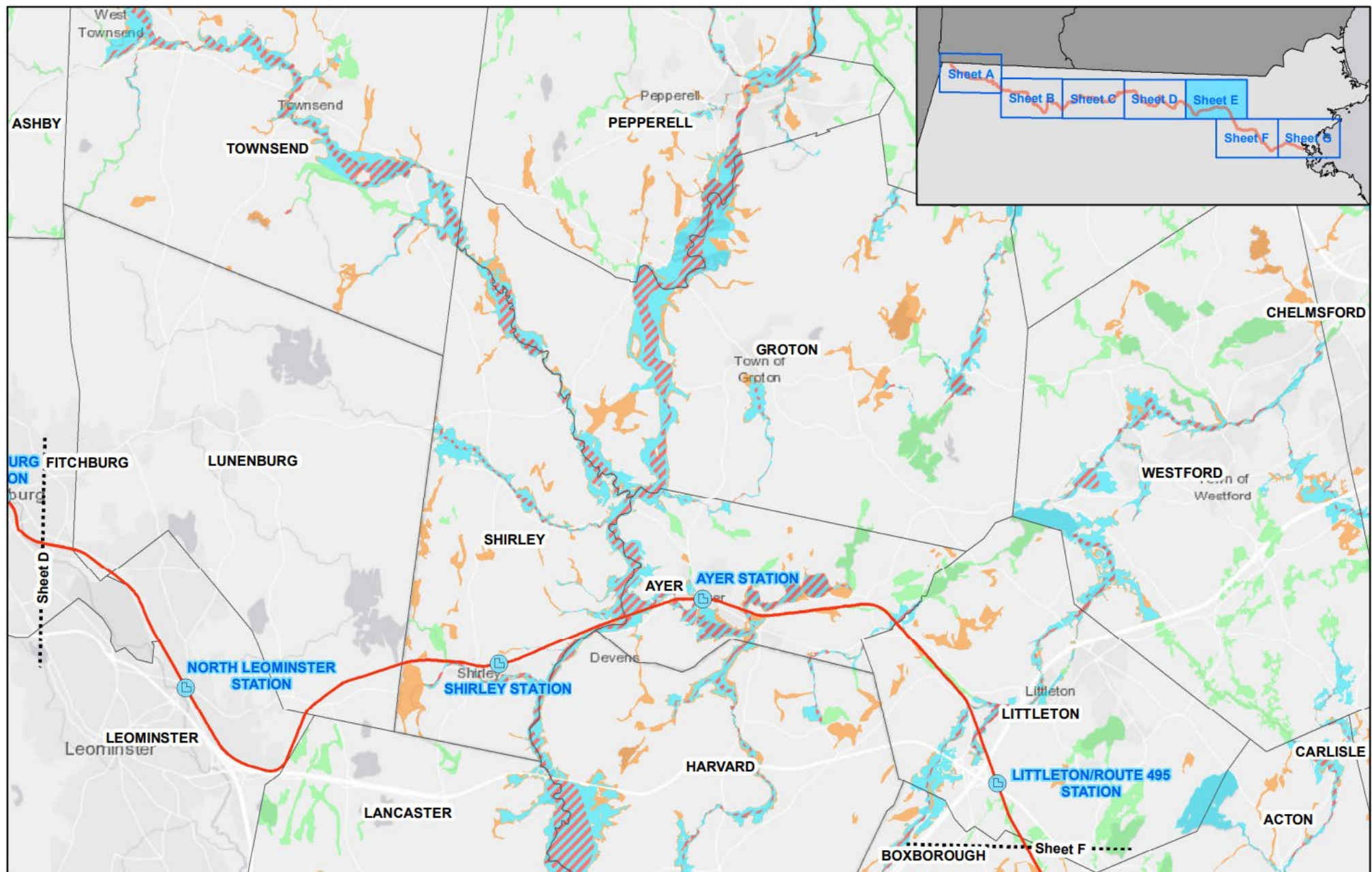


0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



<h3>Floodplain Map</h3> <p>MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study</p>		<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail Station OTS Northern Tier Railline Town Boundary <p>Flood Zone Designations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE AE: Regulatory Floodway VE: High Risk Coastal Area X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect Area Not Included 	
<p>Figure 3</p> <p>Sheet C</p>	<p>HNTB <i>massDOT</i> Massachusetts Department of Transportation</p>	<p>Boston, MA</p> <p>March 2022</p>	<p>Note: - The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles</p>





Floodplain Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 3

Sheet E



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

Flood Zone Designations

A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE

AE: Regulatory Floodway

VE: High Risk Coastal Area

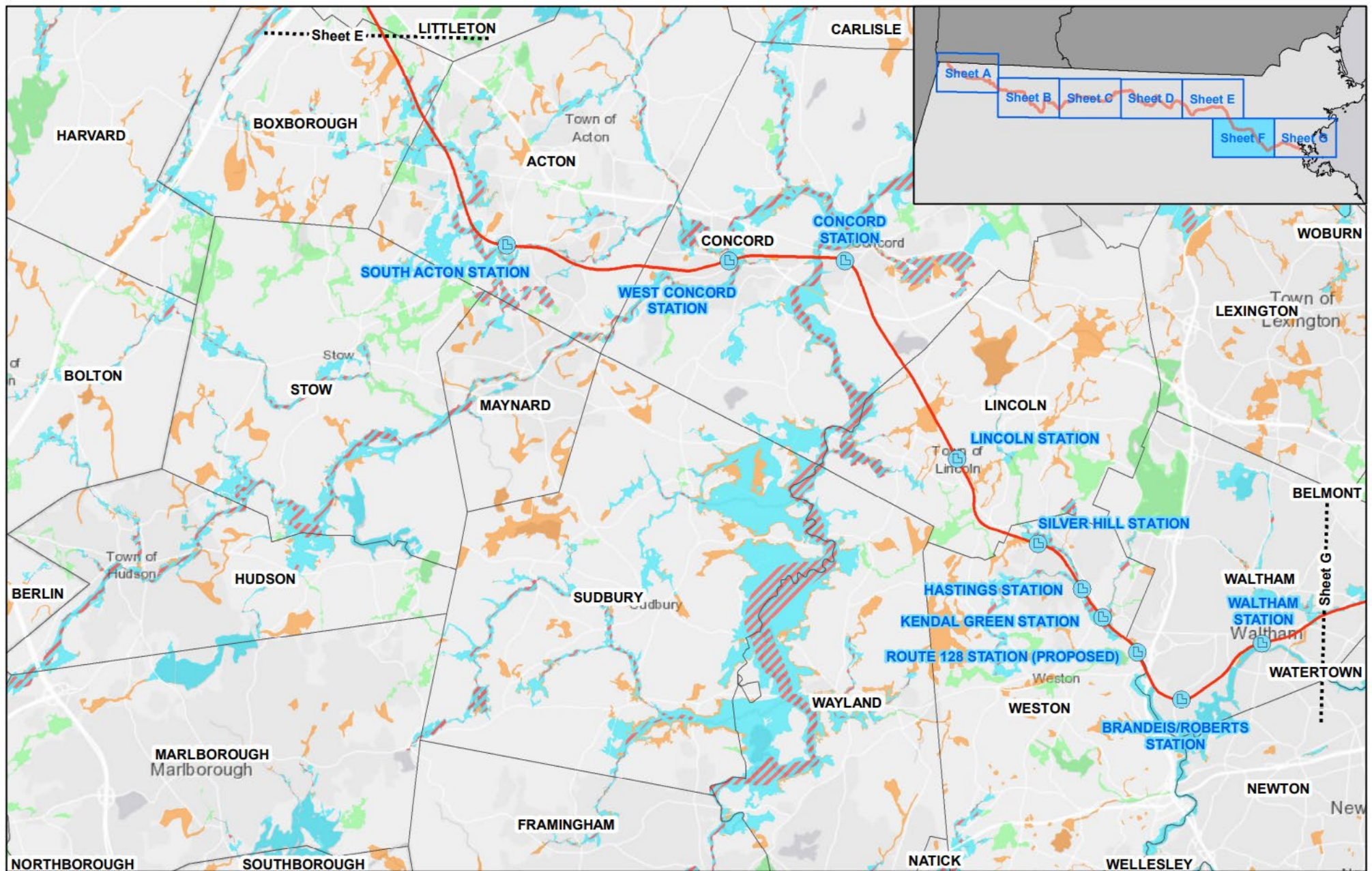
X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect

Area Not Included



0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Floodplain Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 3

Sheet F

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Town Boundary

Flood Zone Designations

A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE

Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE

AE: Regulatory Floodway

VE: High Risk Coastal Area

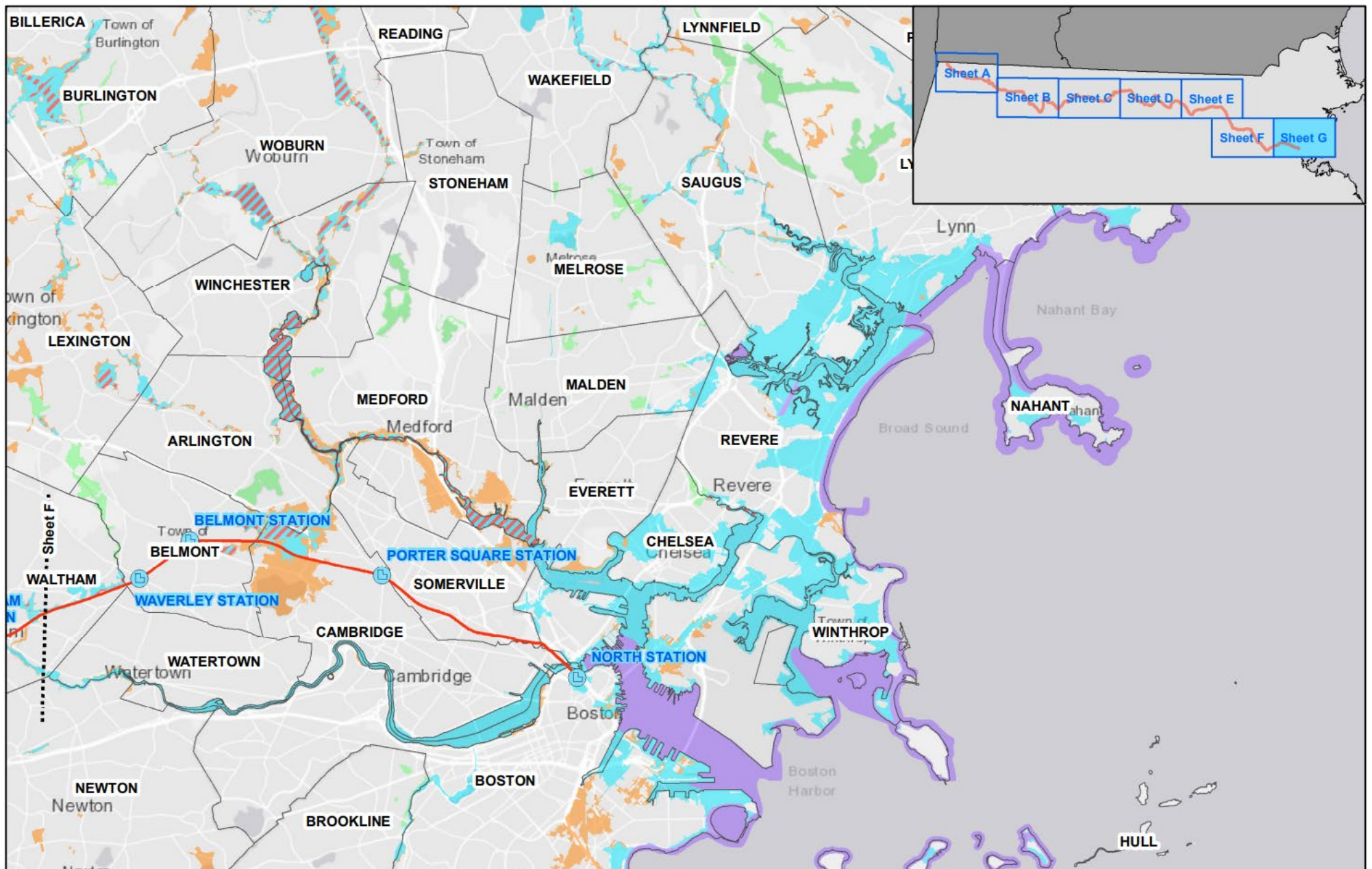
X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect

Area Not Included

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Floodplain Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 3

Sheet G

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Rail line

Town Boundary

Flood Zone Designations

A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE

Area Not Included

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE

AE: Regulatory Floodway

VE: High Risk Coastal Area

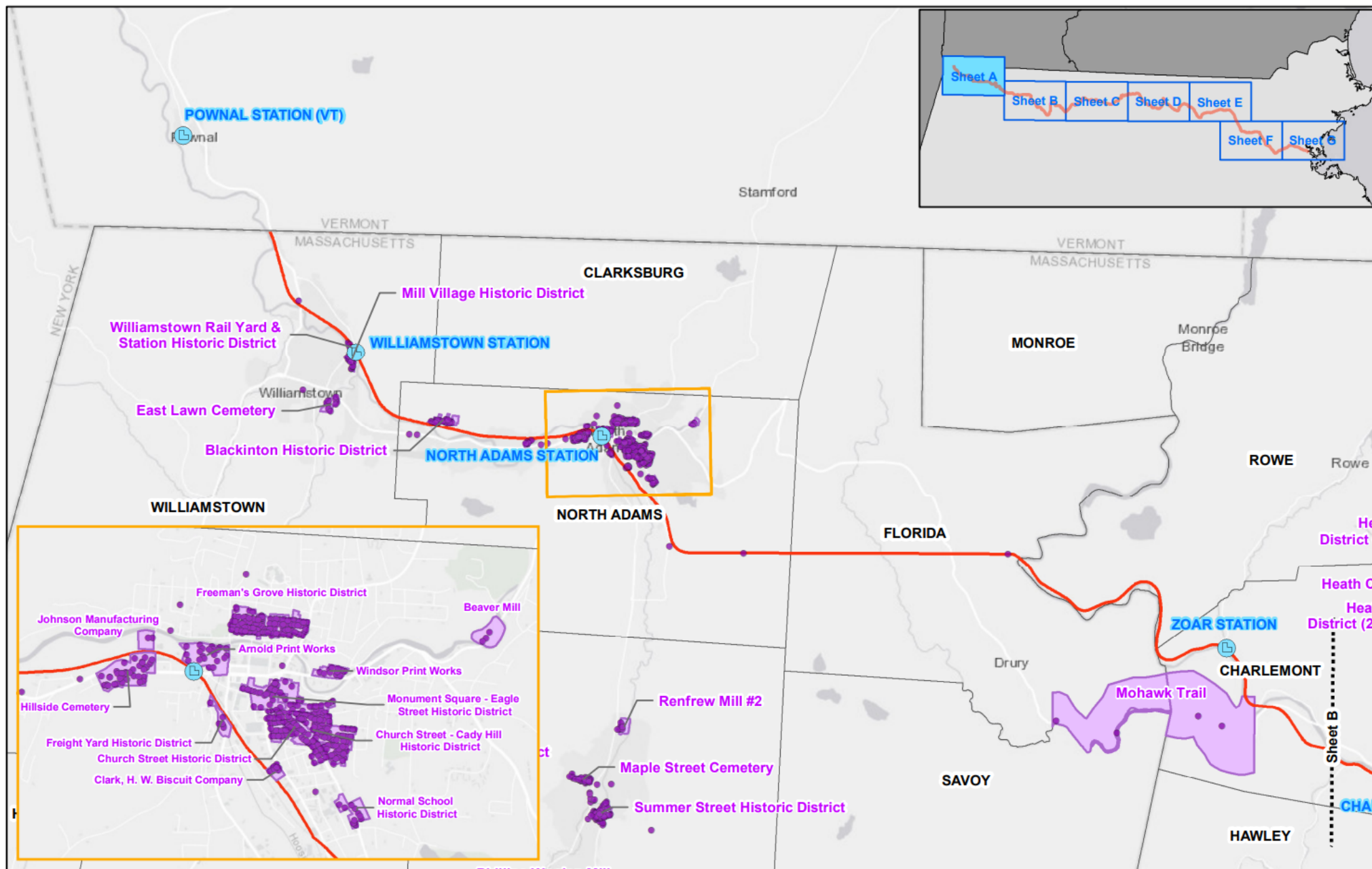
X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect

Area Not Included

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Historical Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 6

Sheet A



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

- Rail Station
- National Register of Historic Places Listed Properties
- Massachusetts Historic Landmark Properties
- OTS Northern Tier Railline

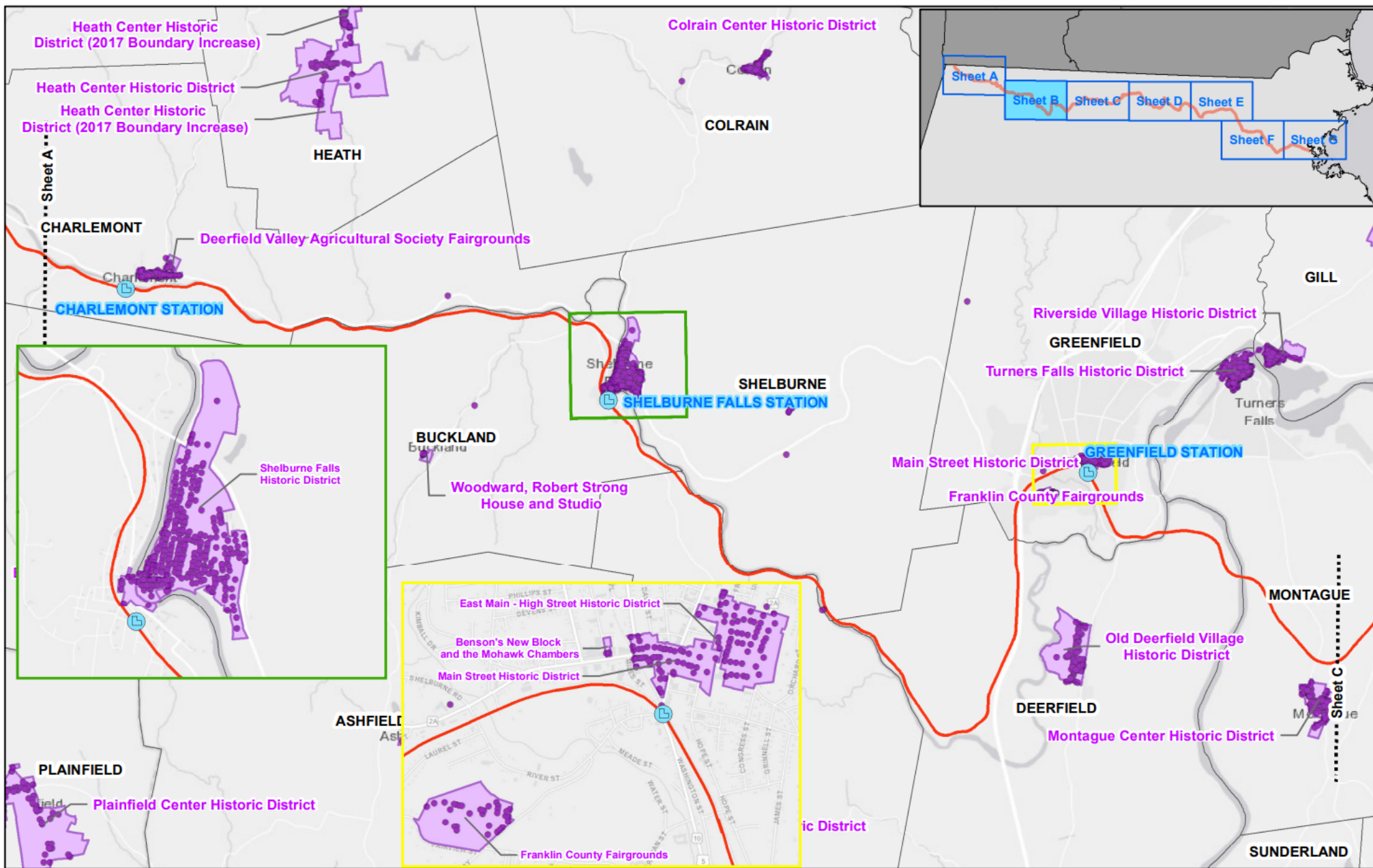
- National Register of Historic Places Listed Districts
- Massachusetts Historic Landmark Districts
- Town Boundary

Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Historical Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

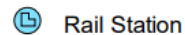
Figure 6
Sheet B



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend



Rail Station



National Register of Historic Places Listed Properties



Massachusetts Historic Landmark Properties



OTS Northern Tier Railline



National Register of Historic Places Listed Districts



Massachusetts Historic Landmark Districts

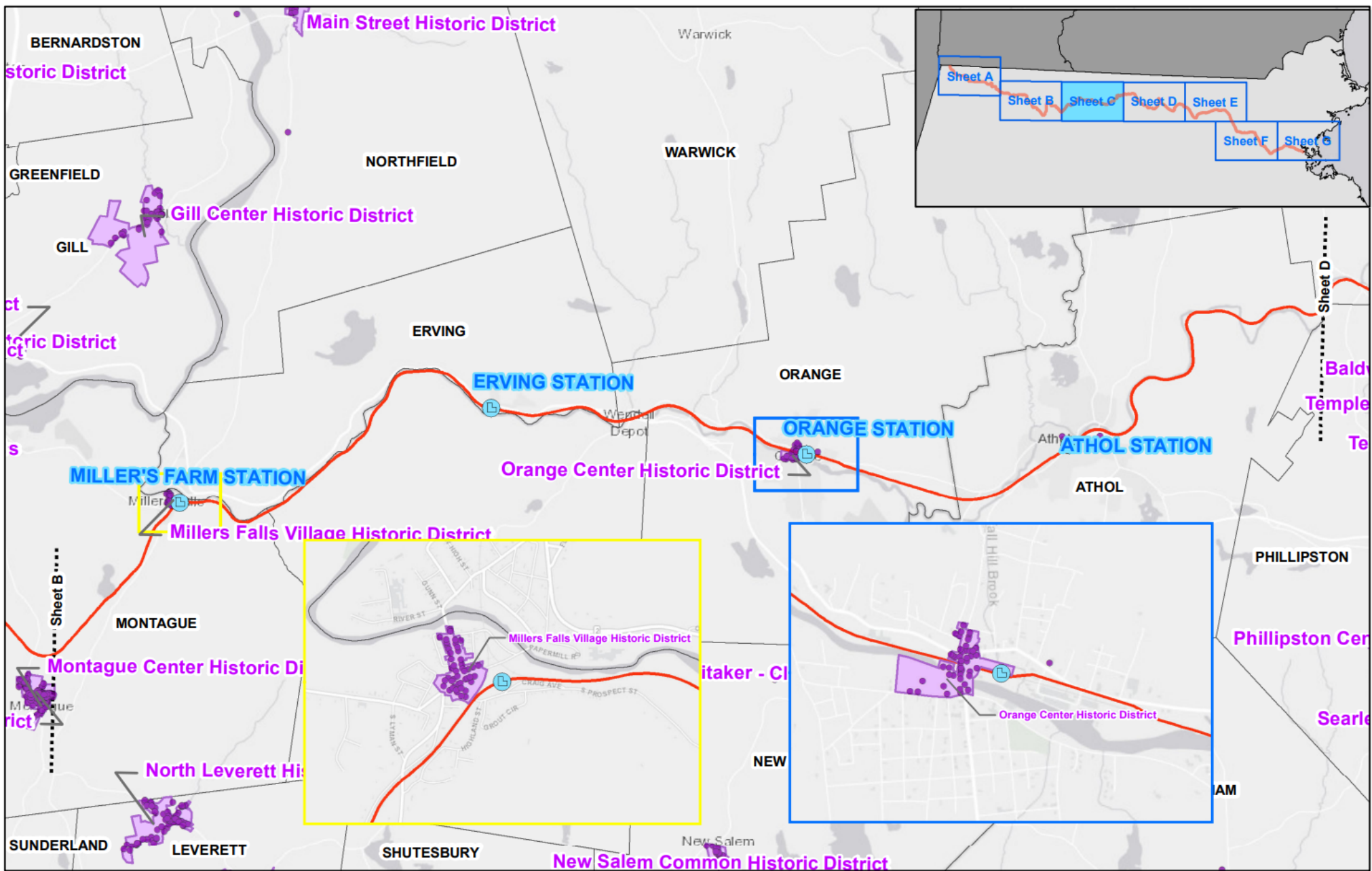


Town Boundary

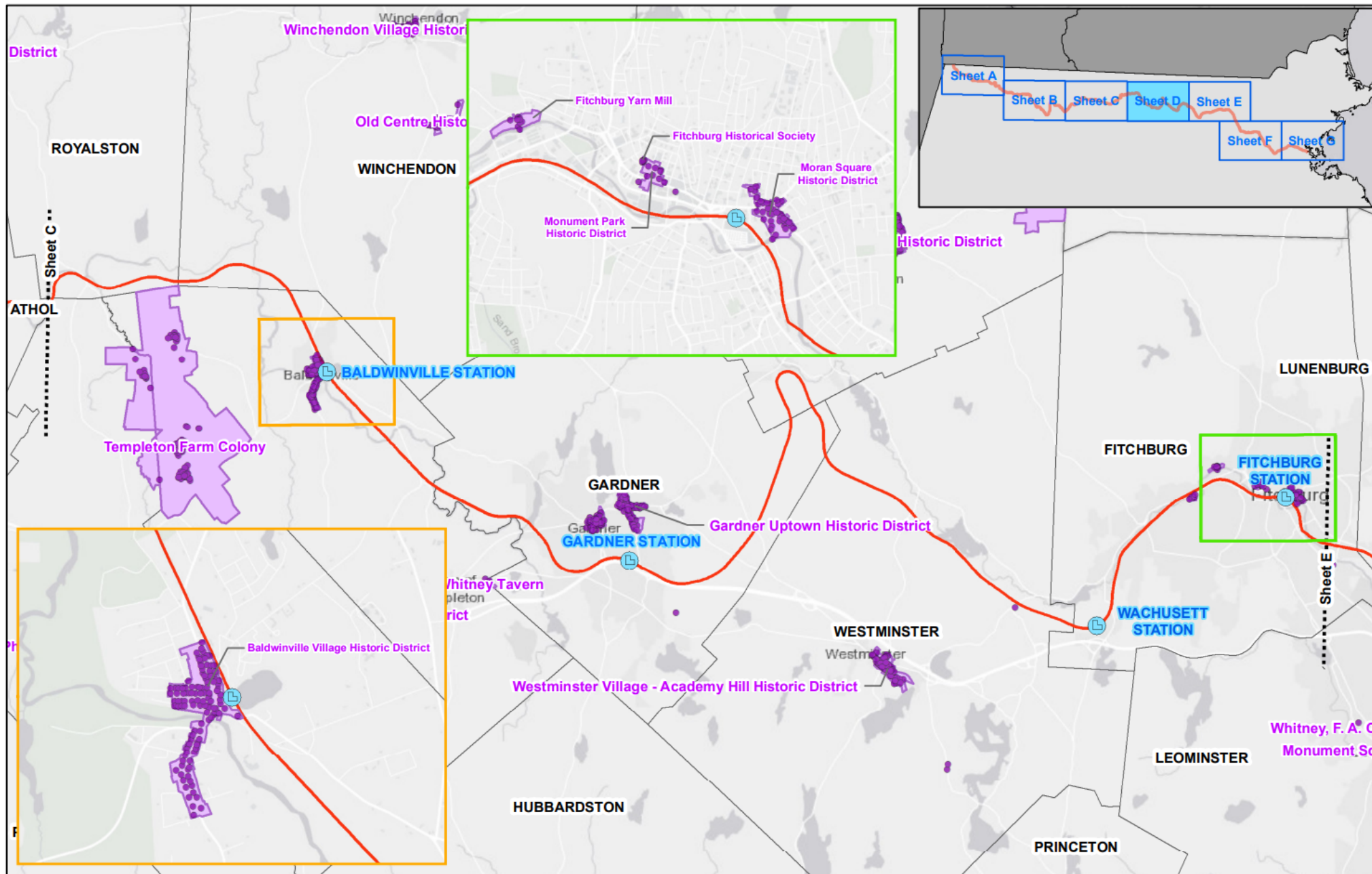
Note:

- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.





Historical Resources Map MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study		Legend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail Station National Register of Historic Places Listed Properties Massachusetts Historic Landmark Properties OTS Northern Tier Railline National Register of Historic Places Listed Districts Massachusetts Historic Landmark Districts Town Boundary 	
Figure 6 Sheet C			Note: - The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.
Boston, MA	March 2022	0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles	



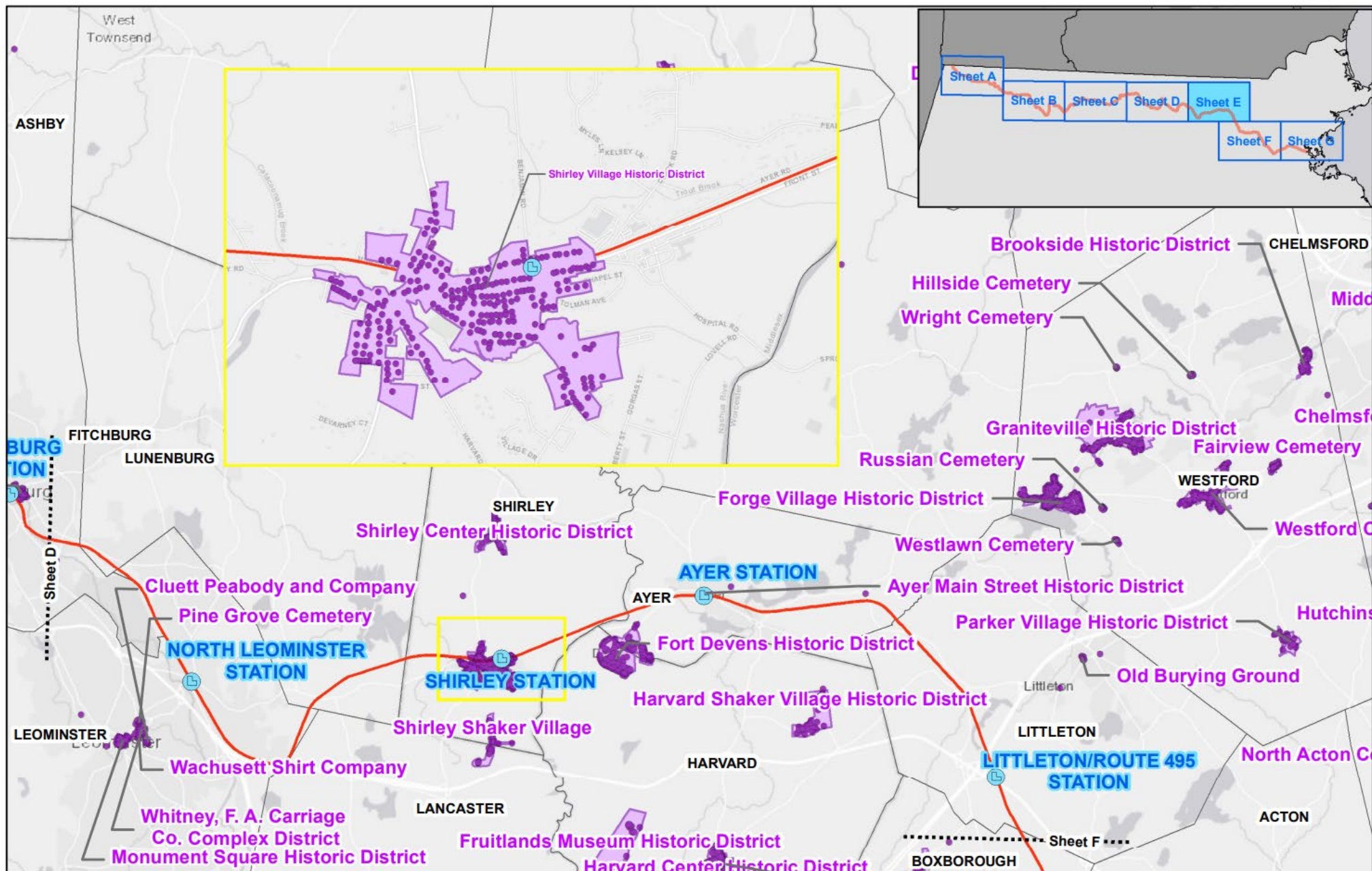


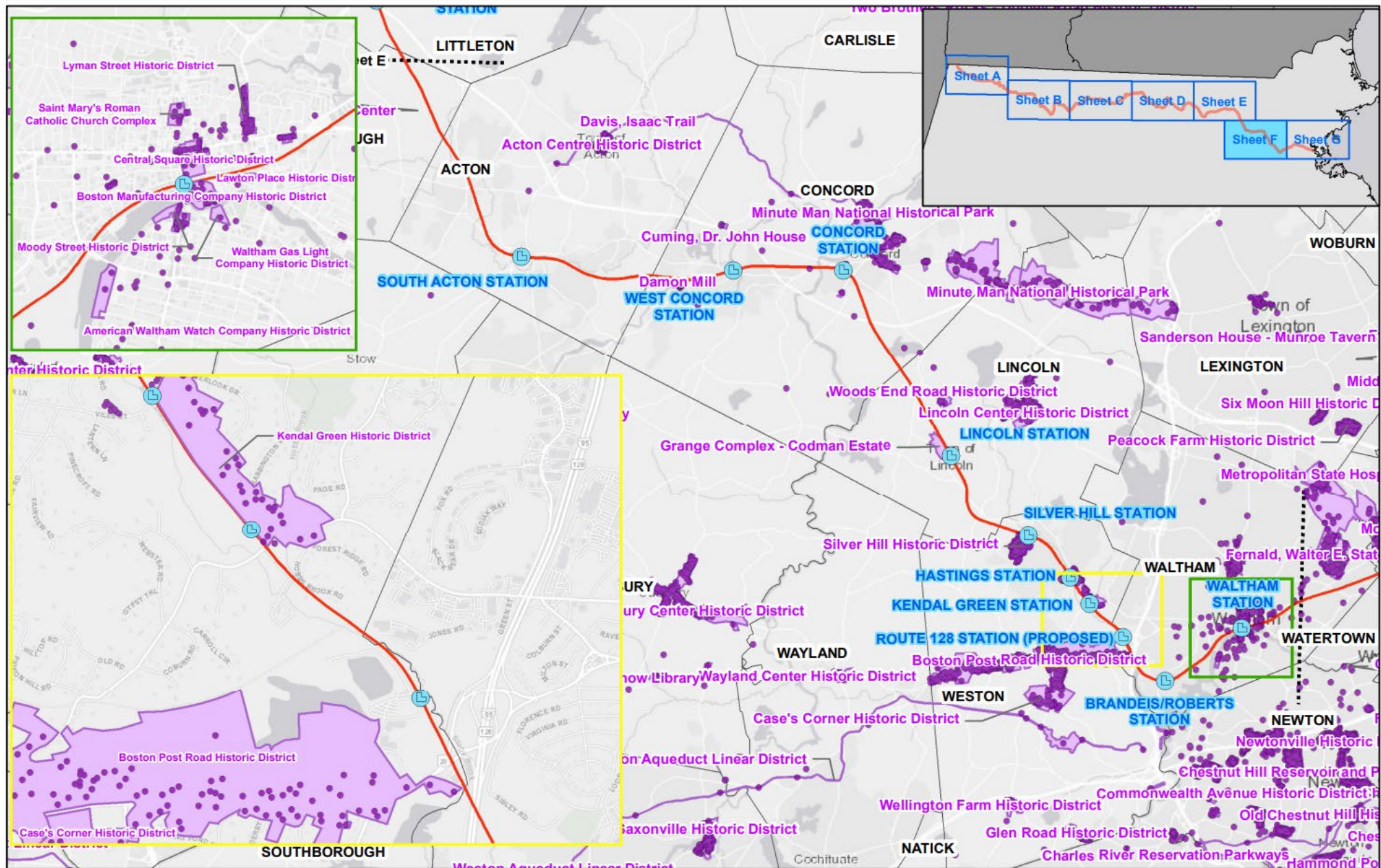
Figure 6

Sheet E

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Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022



Historical Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 6

Sheet F



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

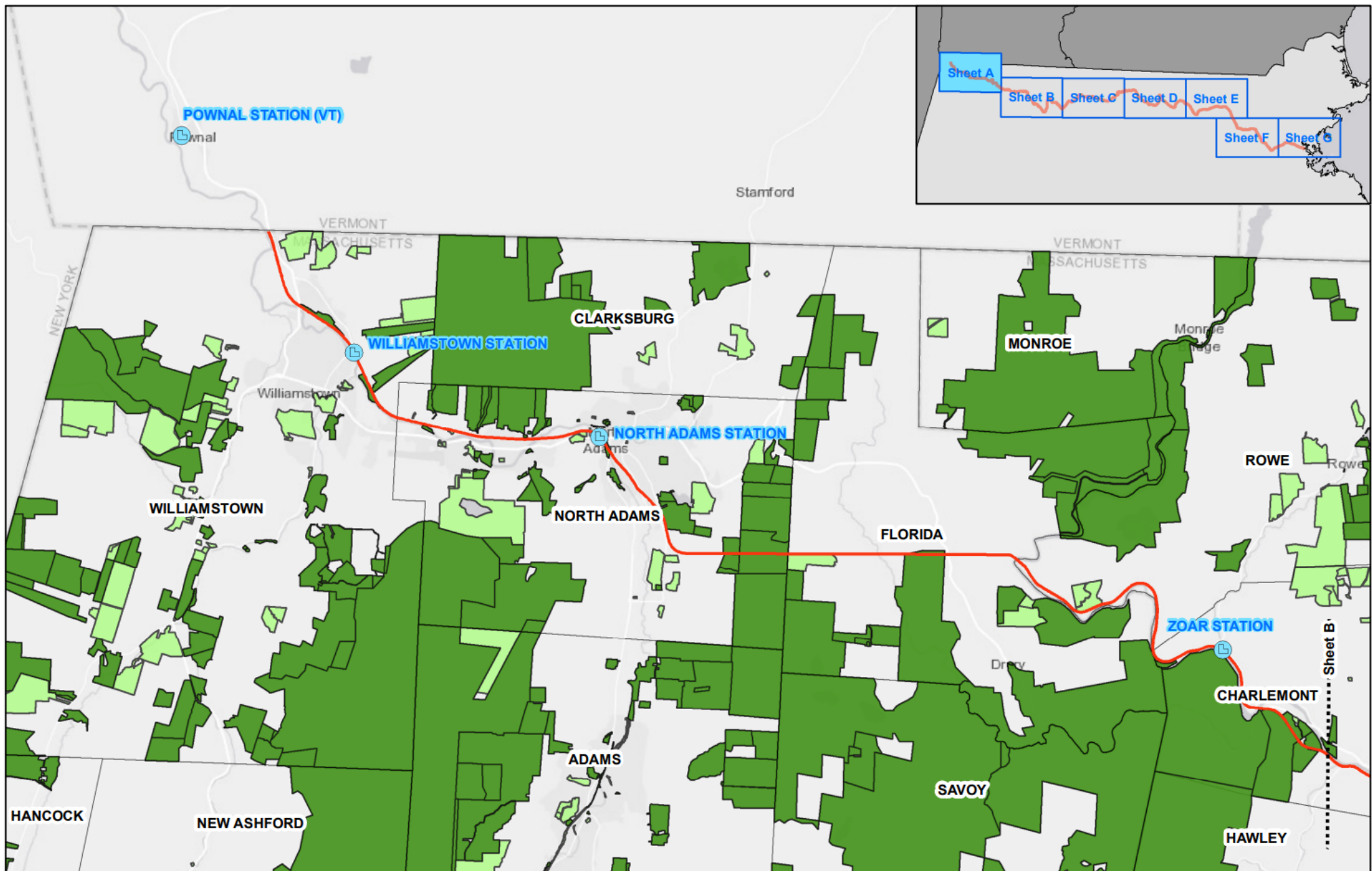
- Rail Station
- National Register of Historic Places Listed Properties
- Massachusetts Historic Landmark Properties
- OTS Northern Tier Railline

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

- National Register of Historic Places Listed Districts
- Massachusetts Historic Landmark Districts
- Town Boundary

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Article 97 Properties
- Protected Open Space
- Town Boundary

Note:
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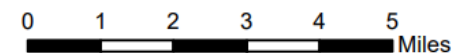
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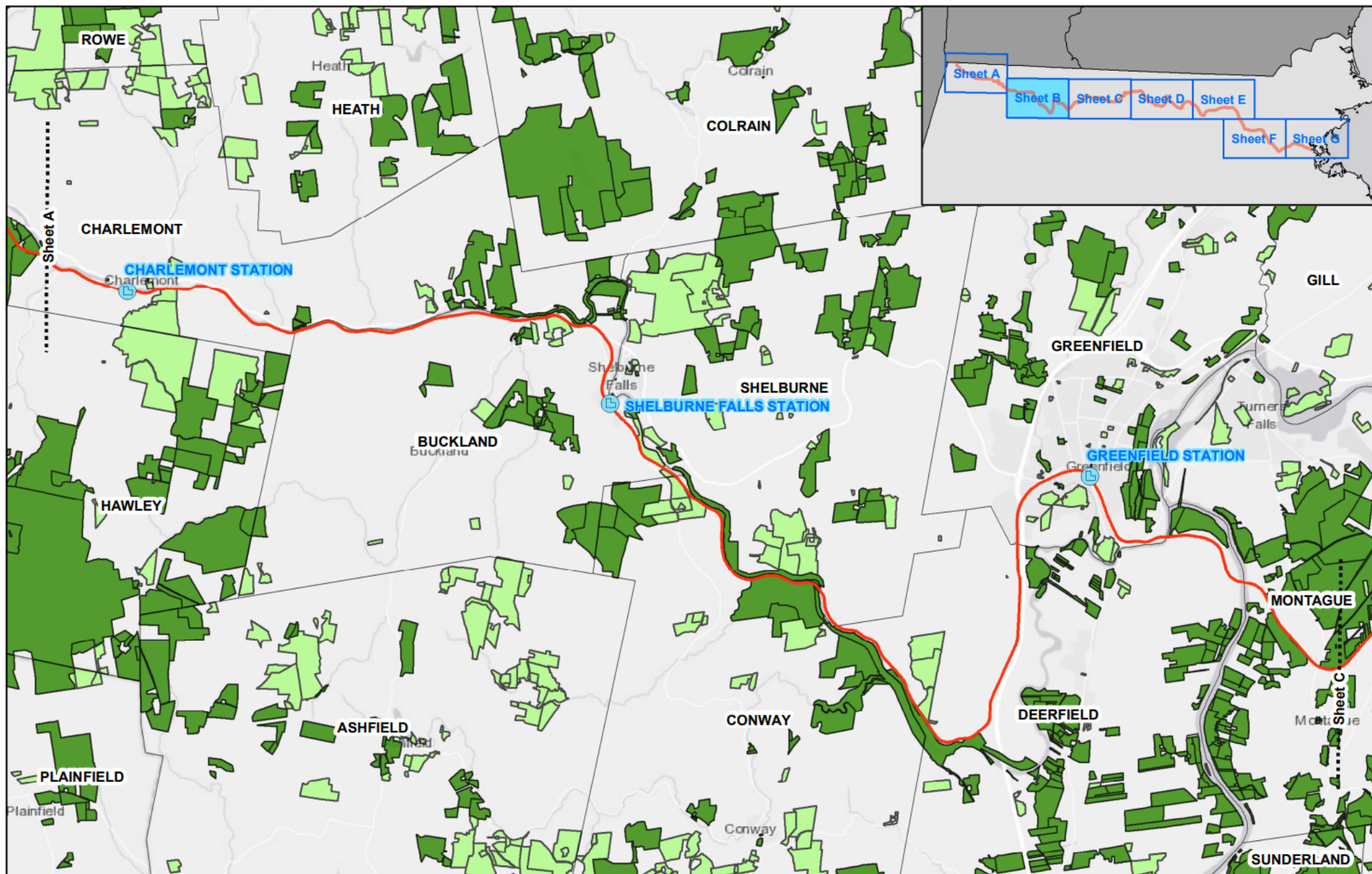
Sheet A



Boston, MA

March 2022





Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend





-  Rail Station
-  OTS Northern Tier Railline
-  Article 97 Properties
-  Protected Open Space
-  Town Boundary

Figure 5

Sheet B



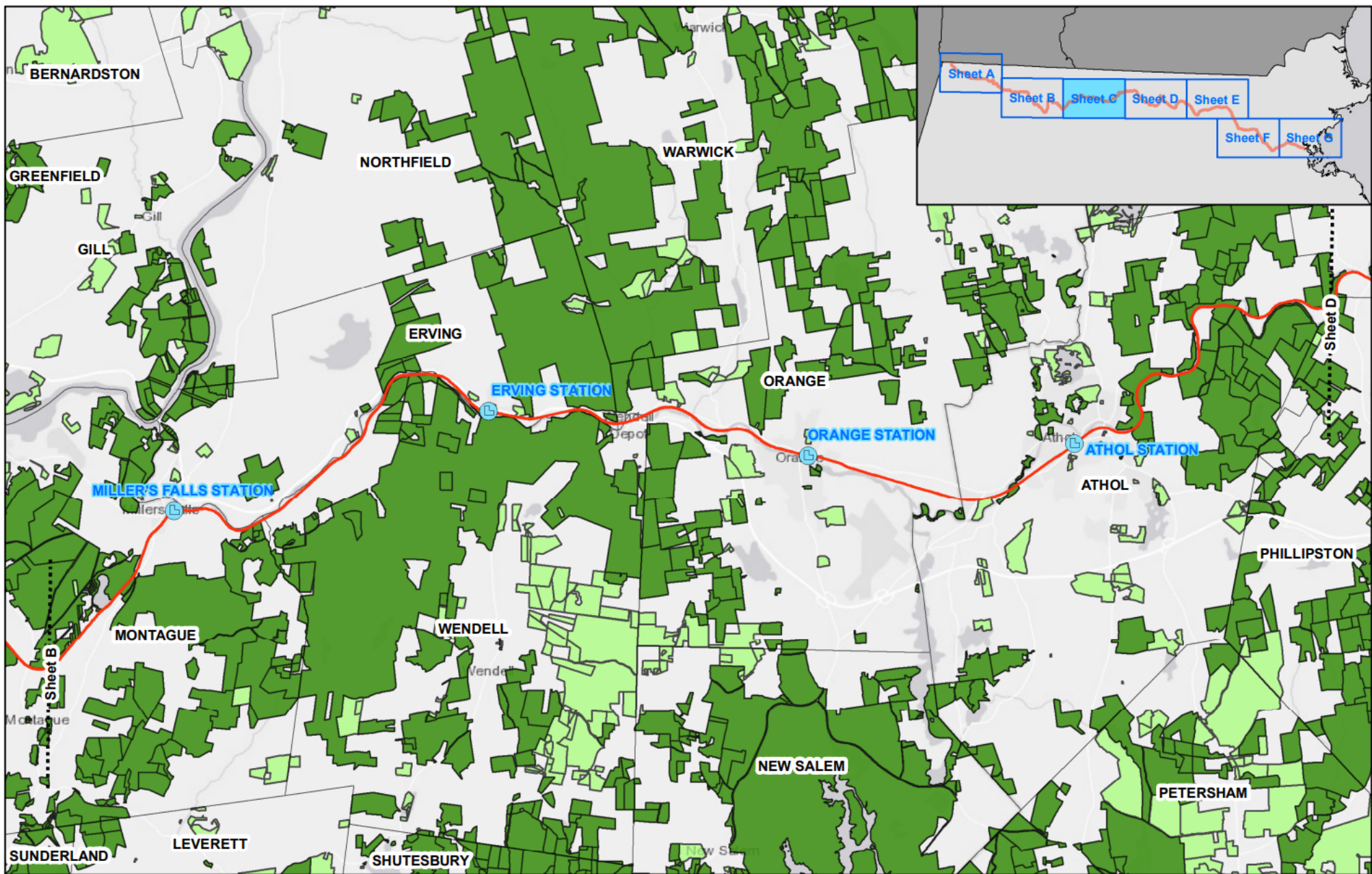
Boston, MA

March 2022

Note:
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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Article 97 Properties
- Protected Open Space
- Town Boundary

Figure 5

Sheet C

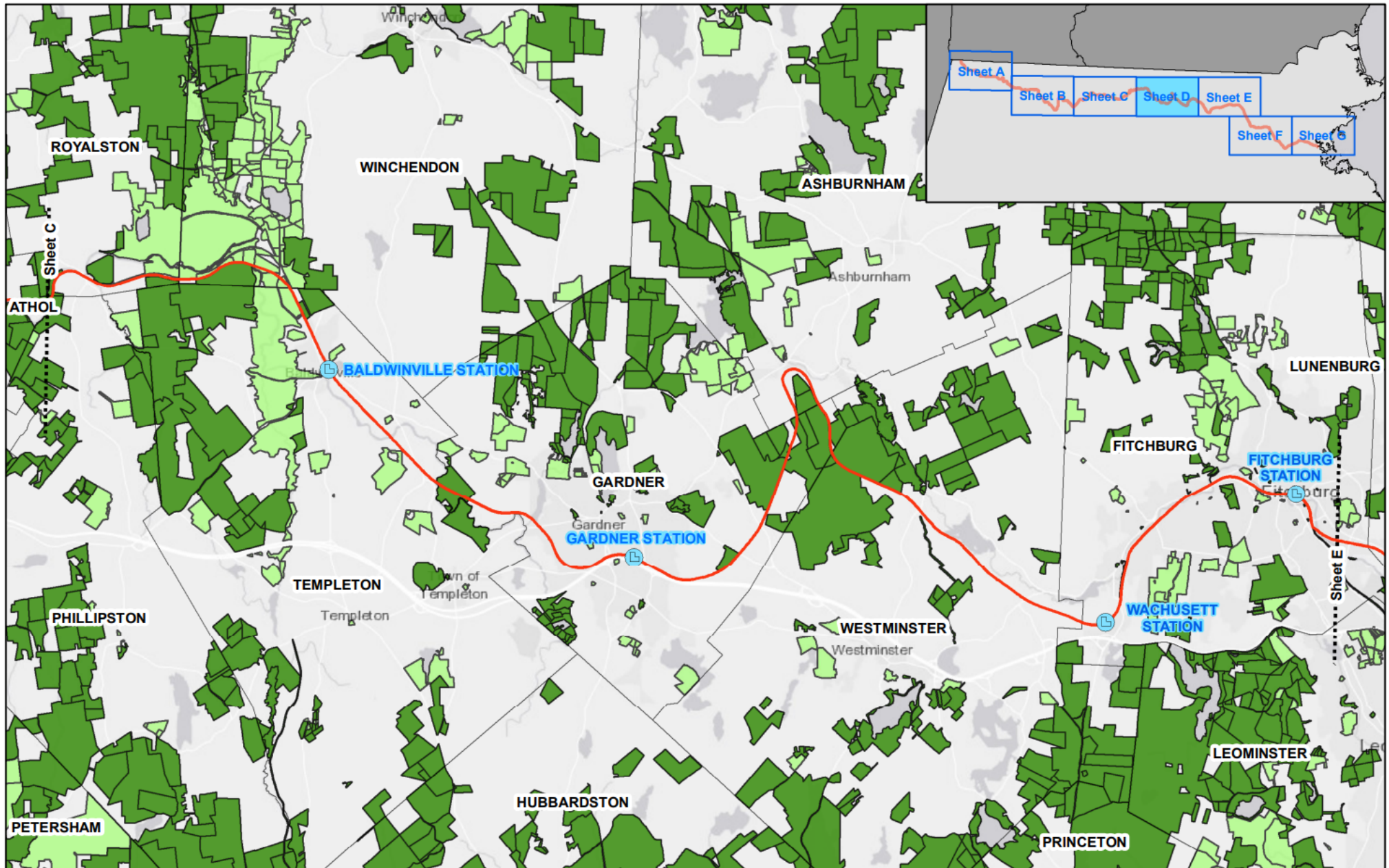


Boston, MA

March 2022

Note:
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Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Article 97 Properties
- Protected Open Space
- Town Boundary

Note:

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Figure 5

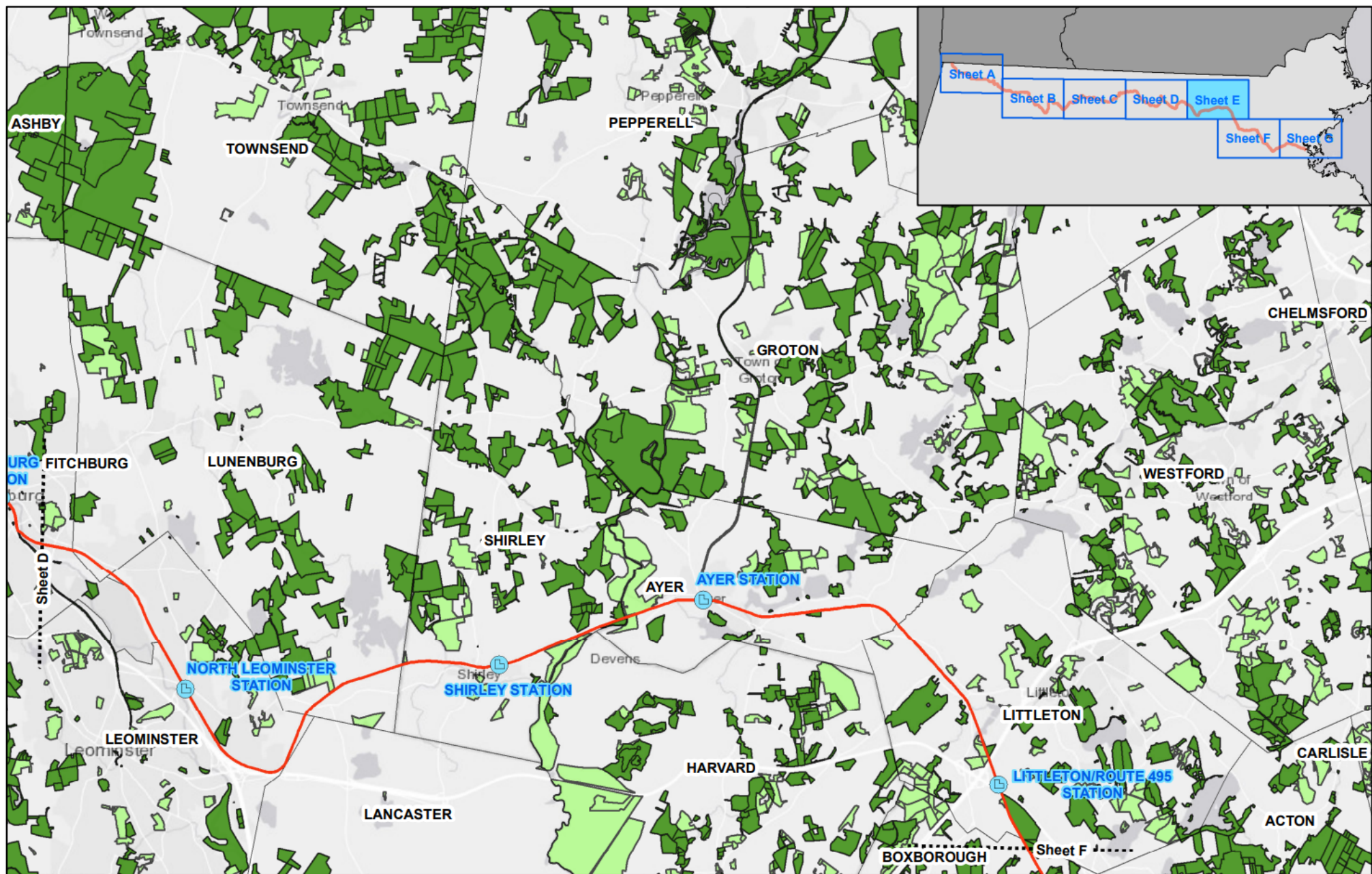
Sheet D



Boston, MA

March 2022



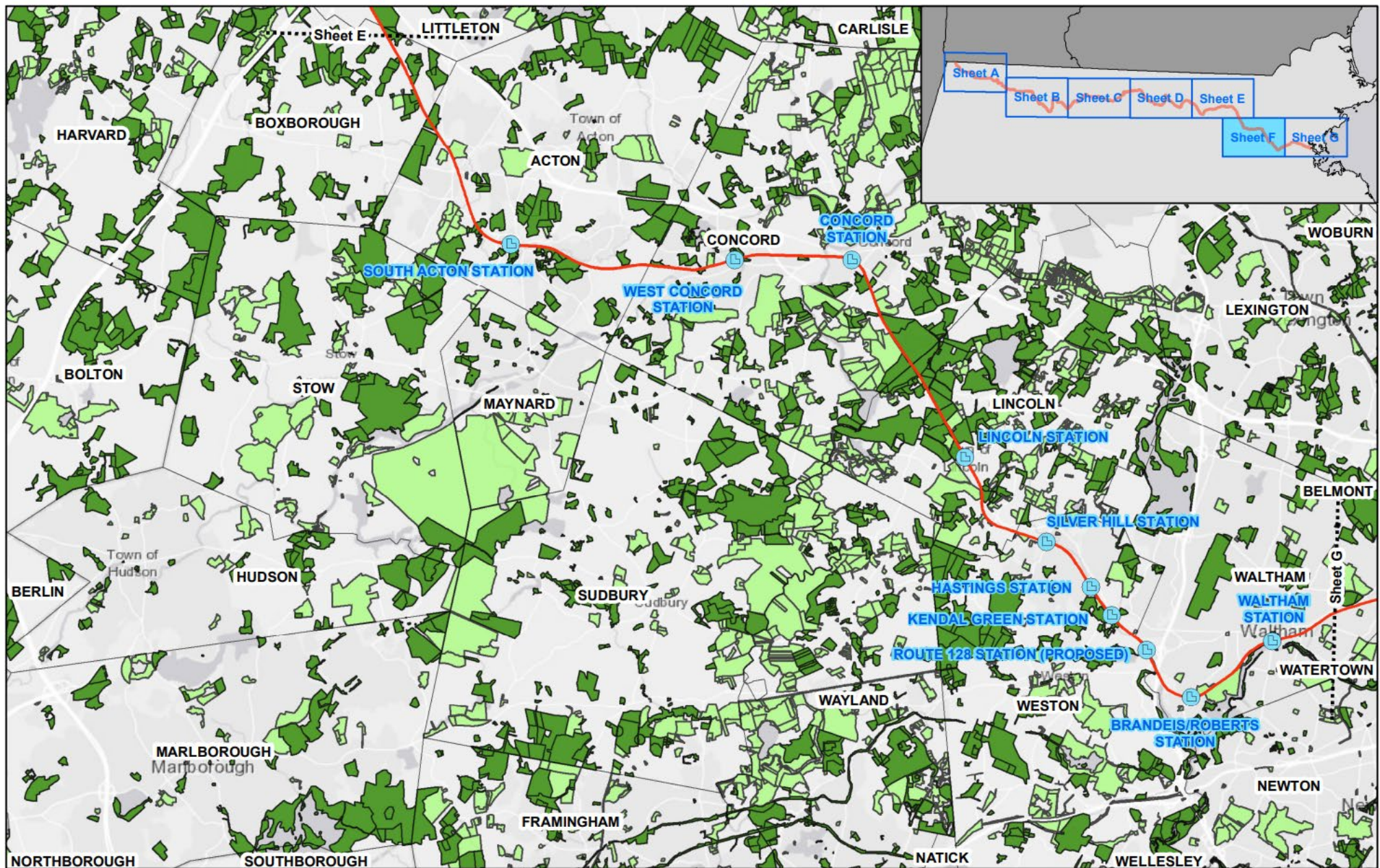


Protected Open Space MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study		Legend <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div> L Rail Station — OTS Northern Tier Railline </div> <div> Article 97 Properties Protected Open Space Town Boundary </div> </div>
Figure 5 Sheet E	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> <div style="flex: 1; text-align: right;"> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Massachusetts Department of Transportation</p> </div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Boston, MA March 2022 </div>		

Note:
 - The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

012345

Miles



Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 5

Sheet F

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Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Article 97 Properties

Protected Open Space

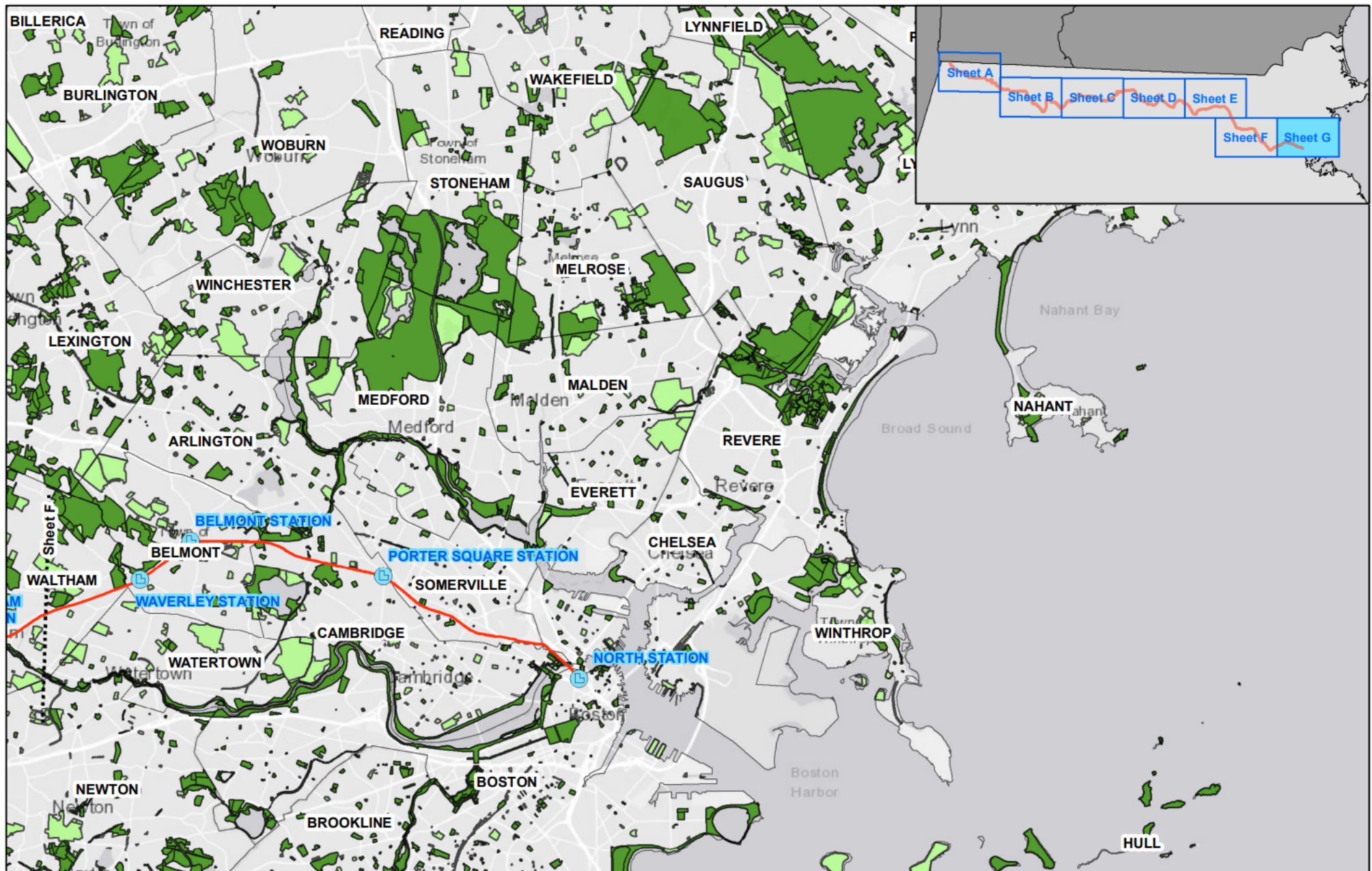
Town Boundary

Note:

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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Protected Open Space

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

Rail Station

OTS Northern Tier Railline

Article 97 Properties

Protected Open Space

Town Boundary

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 5

Sheet G

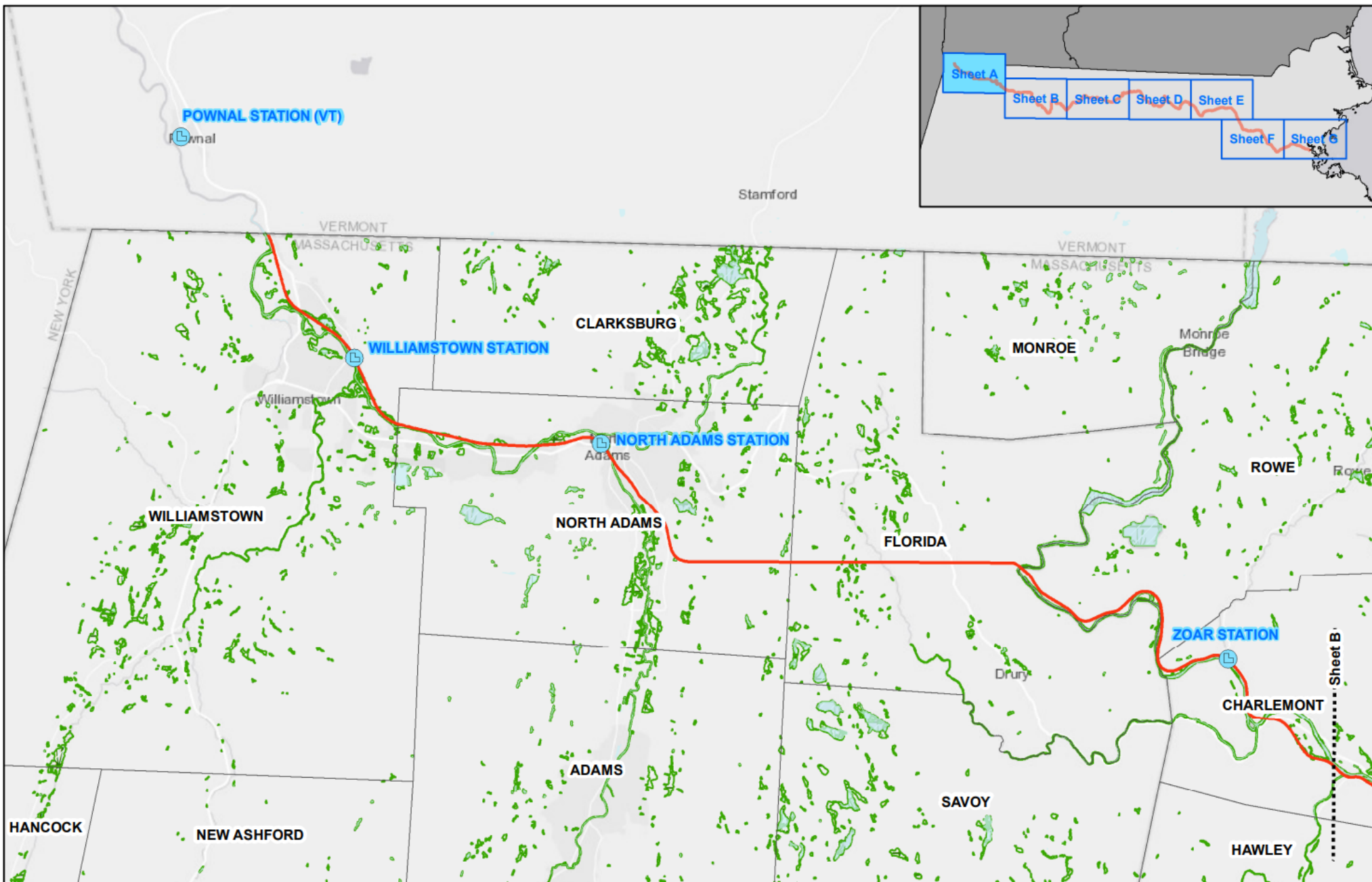
HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles










Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

-  Rail Station
-  OTS Northern Tier Railline
-  Rivers
-  Wetland
-  Town Boundary

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 2

Sheet A

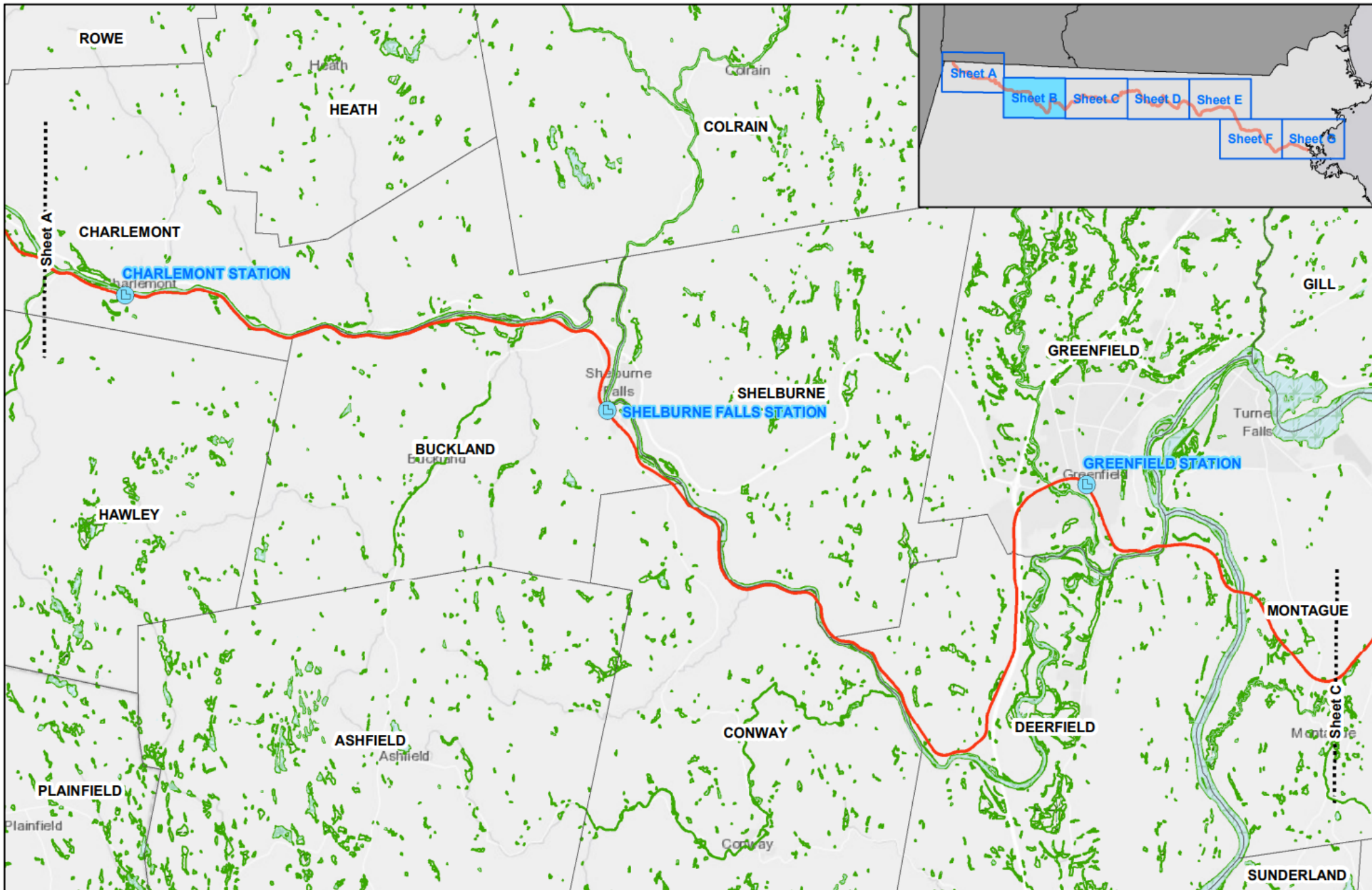


Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles










Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

-  Rail Station
-  OTS Northern Tier Railline
-  Rivers
-  Wetland
-  Town Boundary

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 2

Sheet B

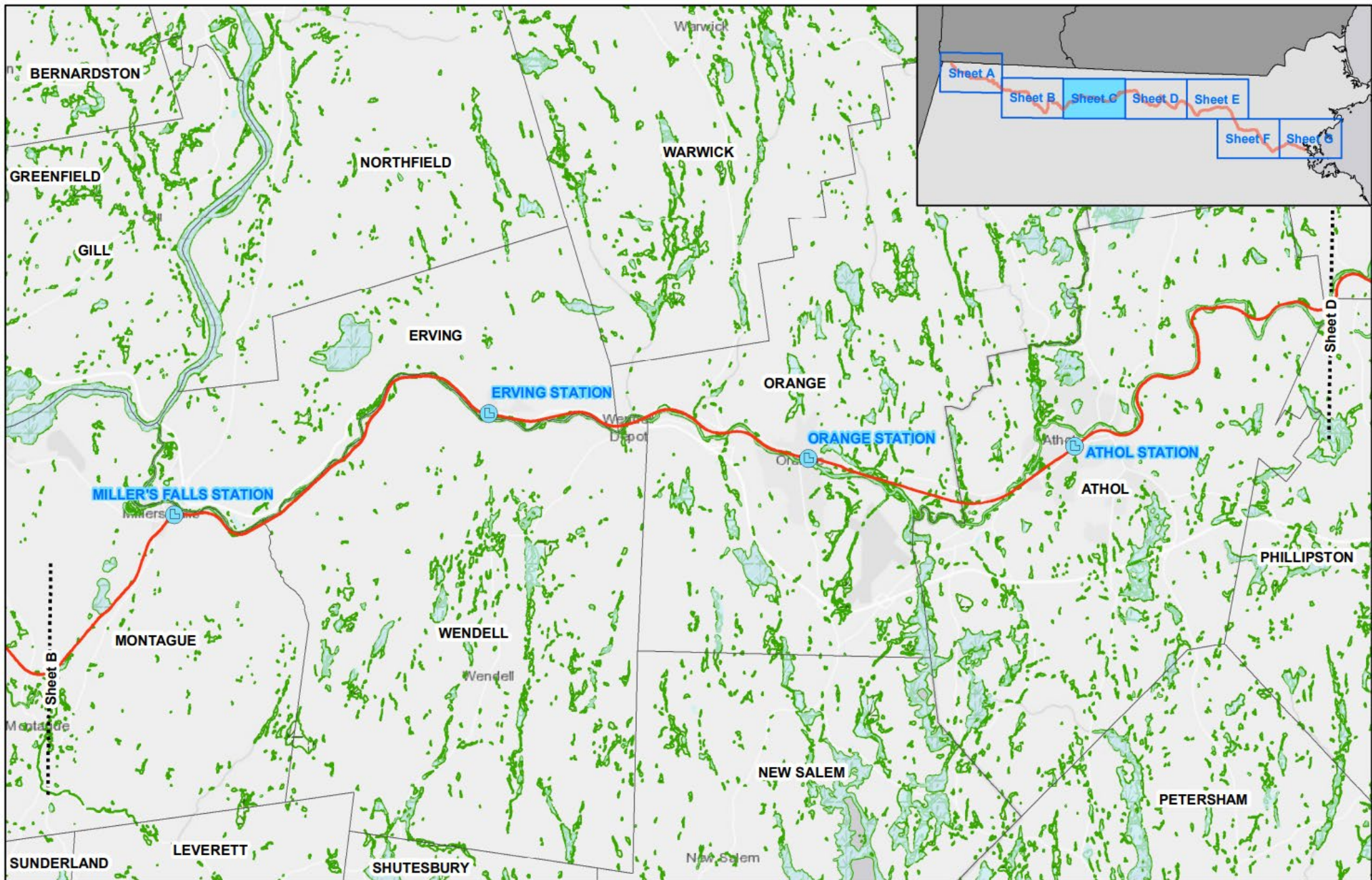


Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Rivers
- Wetland
- Town Boundary

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 2

Sheet C

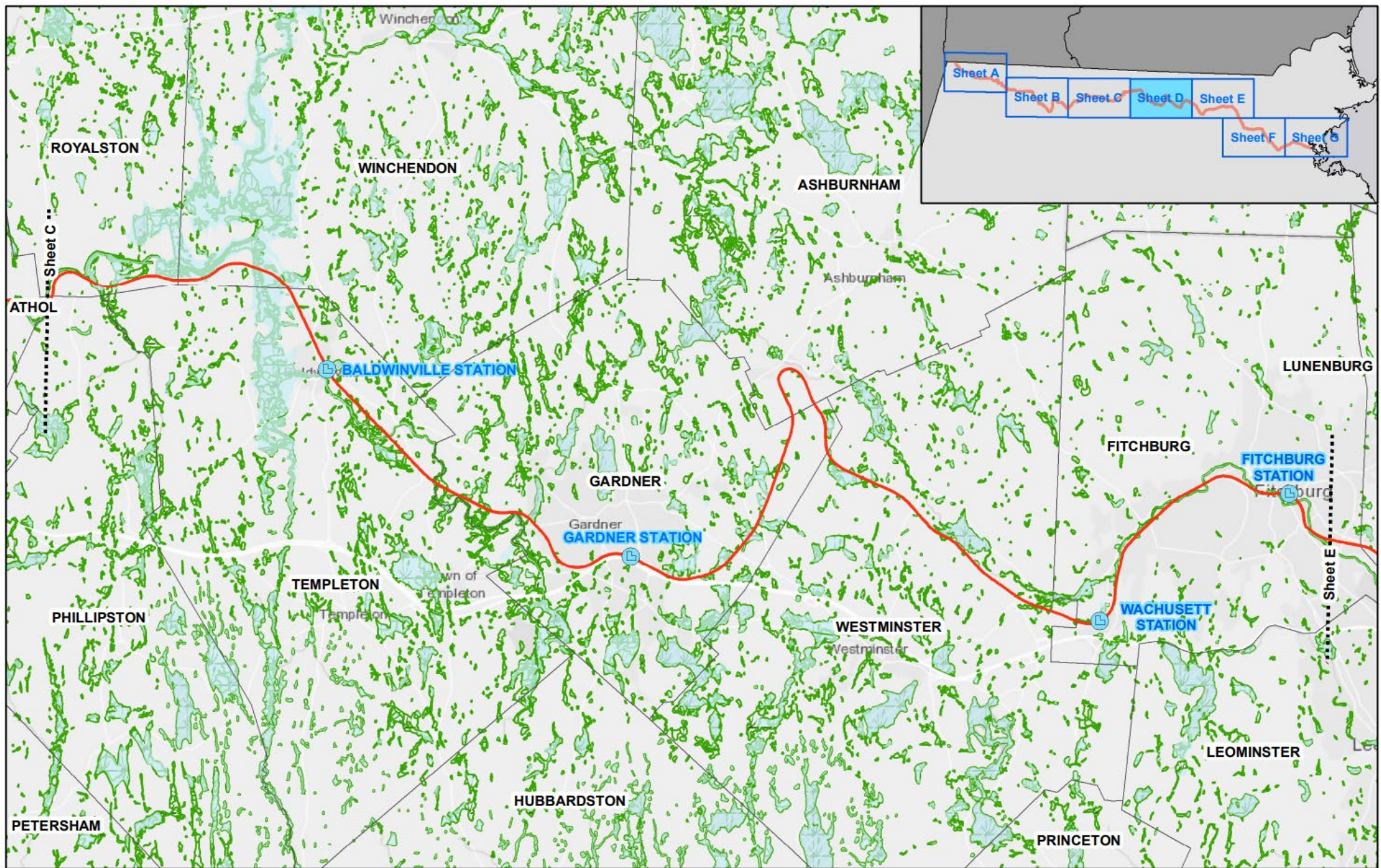


Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

- Rail Station
- Wetland
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Rivers
- Town Boundary

Note:
The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 2

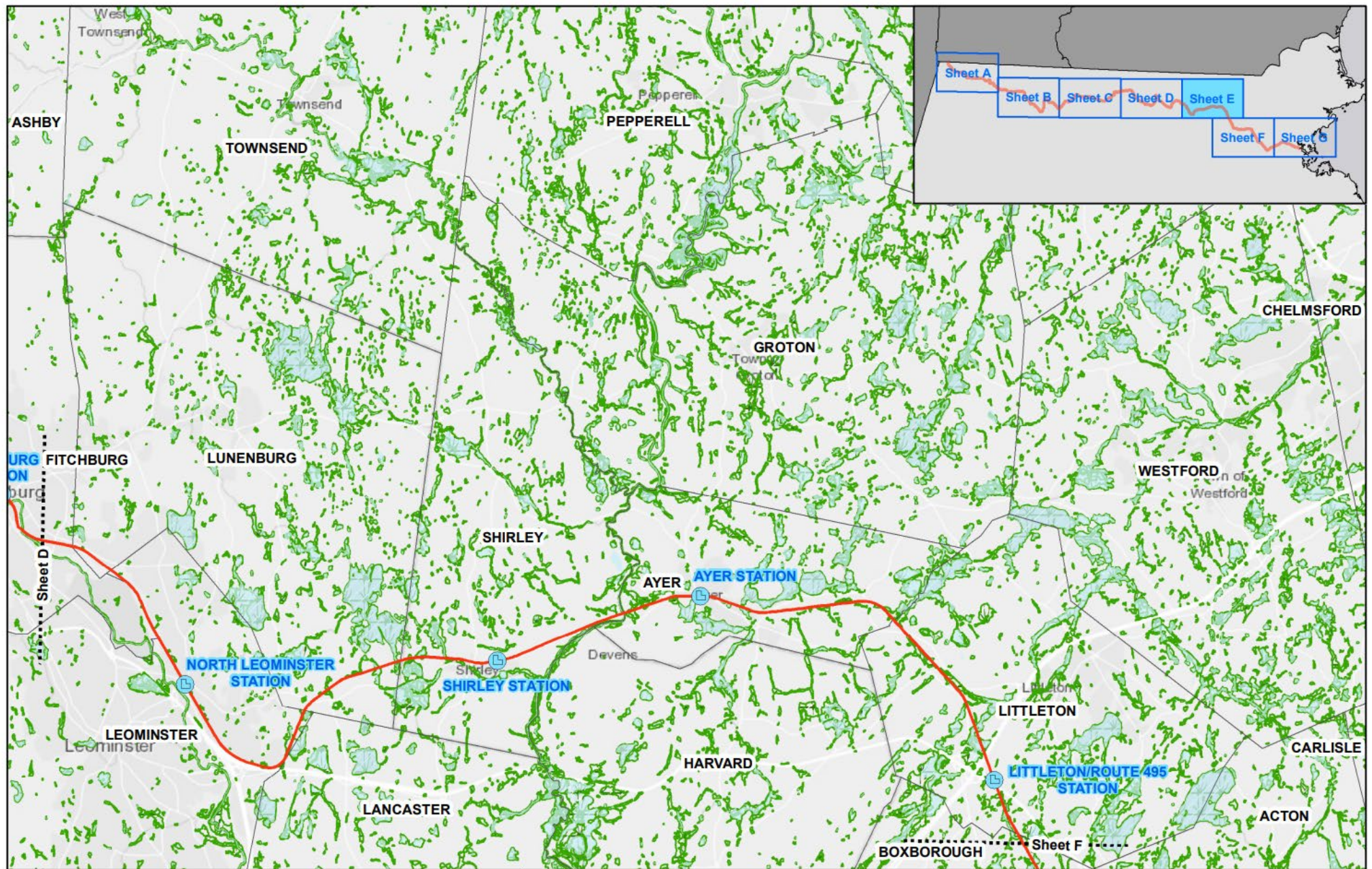
Sheet D



Boston, MA

March 2022





Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Figure 2

Sheet E



Boston, MA

March 2022

Legend

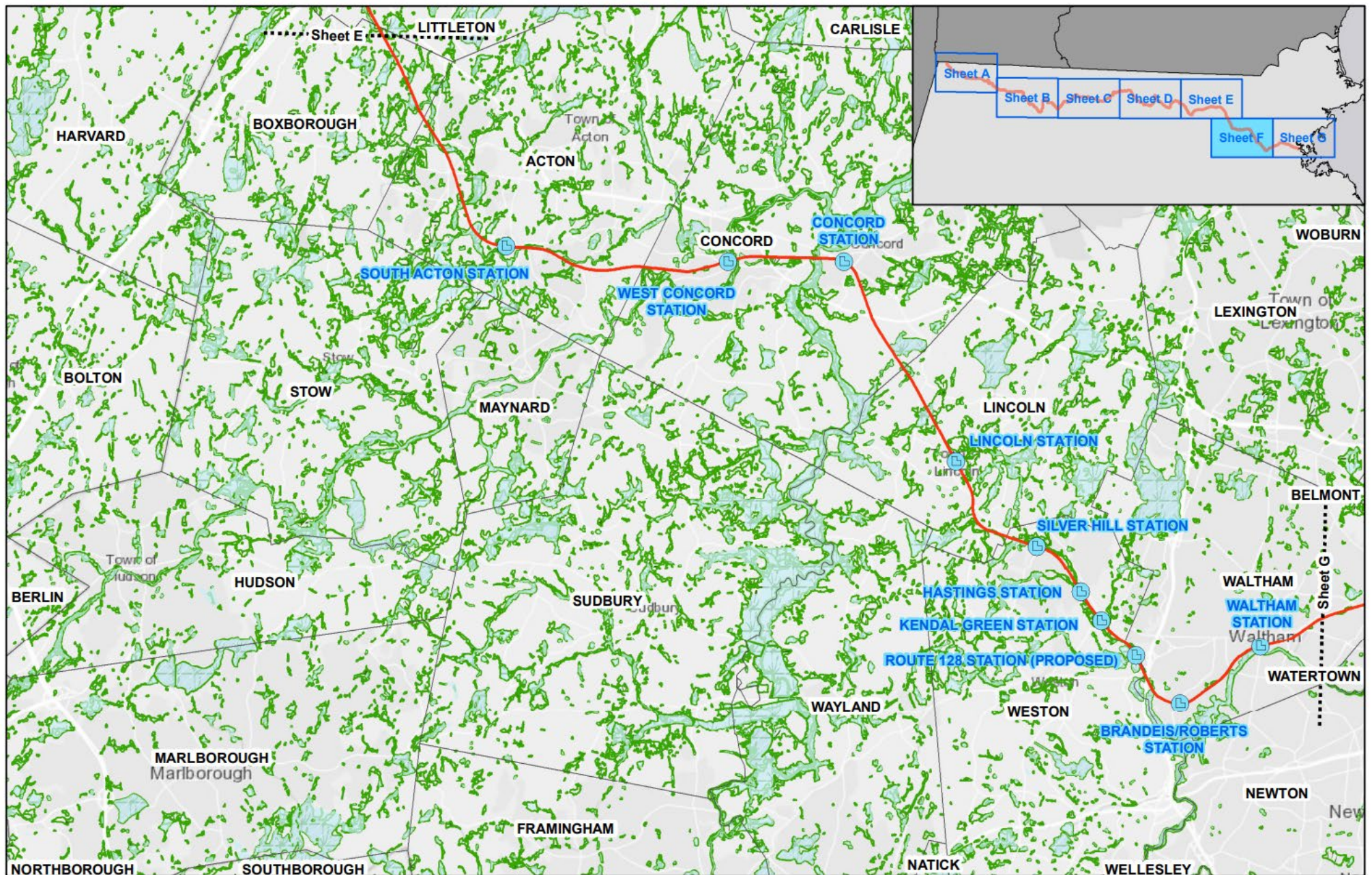
- Rail Station
- OTS Northern Tier Railline
- Wetland
- Rivers
- Town Boundary

Note:

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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles





Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

-  Rail Station
-  OTS Northern Tier Rail line
-  Rivers
-  Wetland
-  Town Boundary

Note:

The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

Figure 2

Sheet F

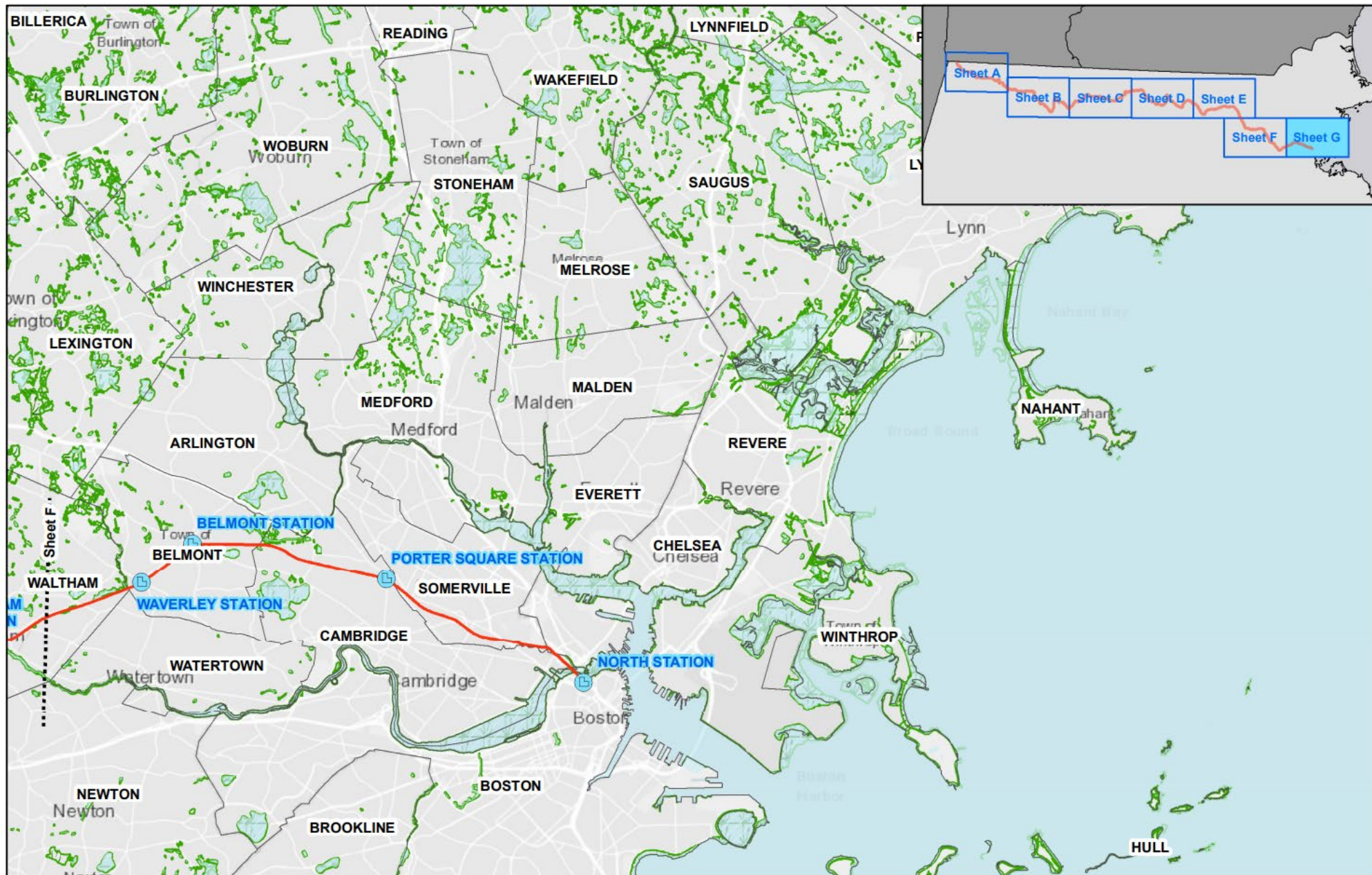
HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles







Wetland Resources Map

MassDOT Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study

Legend

-  Rail Station
-  OTS Northern Tier Rail line
-  Rivers
-  Wetland
-  Town Boundary

Note:
- The railroad between North Adams and Zoar Stations is located in the Hoosac Tunnel.

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Figure 2

Sheet G

HNTB *massDOT*
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Boston, MA

March 2022

Appendix D

Ridership Methodology

Memorandum

TO: Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project Team

FROM: Cambridge Systematics

DATE: September 26, 2023

RE: **Northern Tier Passenger Rail Ridership Estimation**

The purpose of this memo is to outline the data, processes, and assumptions used to develop the ridership forecast for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail (NTPR) service alternatives. This memo supersedes the previous ridership memo for the initial two alternatives. The ridership estimates presented here are for the initial two baseline scenarios plus four additional alternatives.

Alternatives

Six service alternatives have been defined for the Northern Tier passenger rail service, which parallels Route 2 across the Commonwealth. Table 1 lists the alternatives and their specific characteristics. Each proposed alternative would utilize the Pan Am Southern LLC (PAS) line between Mechanicville, NY, North Adams, MA, and Fitchburg, MA, then onward to Boston North Station via trackage owned by the MBTA. Key differences between the various scenarios include travel times and stations served. In addition, one scenario entails a transfer between Northern Tier and MBTA commuter trains at Fitchburg.

Data

Three main data sources have been used to forecast ridership for the various alternatives. These sources are:

- **MBTA Commuter Rail Service:** MBTA Commuter rail station-level boarding data, frequency of service, travel time, and distance to Boston by station tracts for the period March to April 2018.
- **StreetLight Location-Based Services (LBS):** Anonymous cellphone and geographic data processed to develop origin-destination trips between groups of census tracts for the period March to April 2019 and September to October 2019.
- **Amtrak Downeaster:** Origin-Destination passenger volumes, service characteristics, distances for the 2019 calendar year.

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 1 List of Alternatives

Alternative	Stops	Electrified	Trips per direction	Maximum Speeds ¹
1 – Lower Investment	North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph
2 – Higher Investment	North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph
3 – Electrified Service	North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg, Ayer, Porter Square, North Station	Yes	5 per day	60/80 mph
4 – Full Local Service	North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg, Porter Square, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph
5 – Albany Extension / Albany Connector	Albany (NY), North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter Square, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg With Well-Synchronized Transfer Between MBTA Commuter Rail and Northern Tier at Fitchburg	North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg (connection to MBTA)	No	5 per day	60/80 mph

Model Estimation

The commuter rail boarding model first estimates the number of boardings at each station along the proposed Northern Tier Passenger Rail line using linear regression (see Appendix B). It estimates the number of daily boardings at each station based on the average daily LBS trips to Boston and the ratio of transit to auto travel time to Boston. For this model, each station's rail and auto travel time ratio was used as a data point in the estimation process. This ratio is further discussed later in the memo, under the heading *Ratio of transit to auto travel time to Boston*. The regression model was developed using the existing MBTA commuter rail boarding data. Due to the longer travel time to Boston for the NTPR service, MBTA stations with a less than 45-minute travel time to Boston were excluded from the model estimation dataset. These stations often compete with MBTA subway service and are not similar in characteristics (such as distance to Boston and population density) to the proposed NTPR stations due to their proximity to Boston. The stations that were used to estimate the boarding model include twelve commuter rail lines and 36 stations.

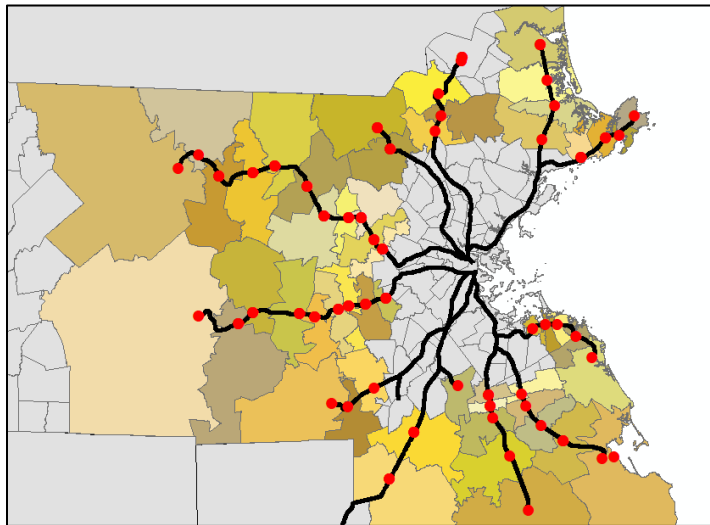
Effect of service frequency on number of boardings was then accounted for by adjusting the modeled boardings based on headway elasticity.

¹ The corridor has a maximum speed of 79 mph in the MBTA territory and 60 mph in the Pan Am Southern territory across all six alternatives.

Average daily LBS trips to Boston

The LBS data provide information on the number of trips that are currently being made in the service area. This number of trips serves as an estimate of the travel market that is being served by the MBTA. For developing the NTPR estimation model, the LBS data was aggregated to catchment areas for each of the MBTA commuter rail stations. The catchment area for each of the MBTA commuter rail stations was determined by using the straight-line distance from the U.S. Census Tract geography centroid, to/from the nearest station. The tract geography was then aggregated to a full catchment area for each station as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 MBTA Commuter Rail Catchment Areas



Total trips between each MBTA catchment area and Boston captures characteristics of the catchment area such as total population and distance to Boston. The higher the population in the catchment area and the closer to Boston a station would be correlated with higher total trips. Therefore these additional variables were not included directly in the model. As expected, the regression model has a positive relationship between total trips and boardings at the station.

Ratio of transit to auto travel time to Boston

For each of the MBTA stations the ratio of average transit travel time to auto travel time to Boston was calculated. This variable captures how well transit can compete with auto as an attractive mode for travel to Boston. Ratios below one indicate that train travel takes less time than traveling by auto. Ratios above one indicate that auto travel is faster than train travel. In the estimated regression model, the lower the ratio, the greater the estimated number of boardings.

Headway Elasticity: Adjusting for Service Frequency

Passenger rail service attracts more riders as the frequency of service increases. We did not include service frequency in the Commuter Rail Boarding model because commuter rail service is much more frequent than the proposed NTPR line. With MBTA commuter rail service, 7 to 10 trains are dispatched in each direction during morning hours – about 15 to 20 trains per direction daily. Including service frequency in the boarding model works well at the estimation stage, with a statistically significant parameter, however its application to NTPR would be unsuitable as it would require extrapolation far outside of the observed data.

One way to capture the effect of service frequency is to use what is called “Headway Elasticity” on the MBTA model outputs. Headway elasticity is a measure of how changes in transit frequency affects transit ridership. According to the literature, elasticity of ridership to service expansion, including having more frequent trains, is typically between 0.6 and 1.0². It means that each 1% increase in transit supply (vehicle-miles or -hours) increases ridership by 0.6 to 1.0%. Multiple factors influence headway elasticity, some of which are type of service, land use, and connection to other transit services with transfers. After considering the characteristics of the proposed NTPR service, it was decided to use a value of 1.00 for the headway elasticity.

NTPR is assumed to run 2 trains per direction between 6 and 10 AM. In the dataset used for fitting the Commuter Rail Boarding model, average MBTA train frequency during those hours is 8.85, which is calculated based on a total of 425 inbound trains of 12 different commuter lines during the 4-hour morning period. Outputs of the Commuter Rail Boarding model would work well if NTPR ran 8 or 9 inbound trains between 6 and 10 AM. However, because NTPR will run fewer trains than MBTA commuter rail, with headway elasticity equal to 1.00, output of the MBTA boarding model should be adjusted. As an example, the adjustment factor for stations that will not be served by both MBTA commuter rail and NTPR is 0.226.

$$(\text{Headway Elasticity}) * (\text{NTPR Freq} / \text{MBTA Freq}) = \text{Headway Adjustment Factor}$$

$$(1.00) * (2 / 8.85) = 0.226$$

Headway adjustment factors for individual stations are presented in Appendix B.

Model Application

The Commuter Rail Boarding Model was used to estimate the total boardings at each of the NTPR stations for each alternative.

Average daily LBS trips to Boston

The model uses the LBS data of March, April, September, and October months in 2019 to estimate the total volume of trips from station catchment areas to the Boston area. The “Boston” catchment area is comprised of North Station and Porter Square. North Station destination communities include Boston, Cambridge, Brookline, Chelsea, Everett, and Somerville. Porter Square destination communities include Arlington, Belmont, and Medford. The average daily trips from the NTPR stations to the Boston area are shown in Table 2.

²John E. Evans (2004), “Transit Scheduling and Frequency,” Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes, TCRP Report 95.

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 2 LBS Average Daily Trips from Catchment Areas to Boston Area by Alternative

Alternative	Station Catchment Area	Porter Square	North Station	Total Boston Area
1 – Lower Investment *	NORTH ADAMS	N.A.	58	58
	GREENFIELD	N.A.	184	184
	FITCHBURG	N.A.	193	193
2 – Higher Investment *	NORTH ADAMS	N.A.	58	58
	GREENFIELD	N.A.	184	184
	FITCHBURG	N.A.	193	193
3 – Electrified Service	NORTH ADAMS	2	58	60
	GREENFIELD	23	159	182
	ATHOL / ORANGE	32	236	268
	FITCHBURG	14	196	210
	AYER	24	229	253
4 – Full Local Service	NORTH ADAMS	2	54	56
	SHELBURNE FALLS	1	18	19
	GREENFIELD	23	157	180
	ATHOL / ORANGE	32	234	266
	GARDNER	78	660	738
	FITCHBURG	14	196	210
5 –Albany Extension / Albany Connector	ALBANY	-	20	20
	NORTH ADAMS	2	59	61
	GREENFIELD	25	189	214
	FITCHBURG	14	196	210
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg With Transfer Between MBTA Commuter Rail and NTPR at Fitchburg	NORTH ADAMS	2	58	60
	GREENFIELD	23	158	181
	ATHOL / ORANGE	32	234	266
	FITCHBURG	14	196	210

* The “Lower Investment” and “Higher Investment” station areas are identical, and therefore the LBS average daily trips from the station catchment areas are also identical.

Rail vs auto travel time to Boston

LBS data provided by StreetLight includes trip travel times. Because western Massachusetts’ communities along the NTPR are presently do not have effective public transportation options for travel to Boston, LBS data exclusively represents auto travel time. NTPR transit travel times to Boston are listed in Table 3. For more context, travel times for Amtrak’s *Lake Shore Limited* are also presented. For this comparison, each of the NTPR stops was paired with a *Lake Shore Limited* stop with similar distance to Boston. NTPR stops that did not have an equivalent stop on the *Lake Shore Limited*’s route were left blank.

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 3 List of Travel Times to Boston (Hours:Minutes)

Alternative	NTPR		Lake Shore Limited	
	Station Catchment Area	Run Time to Boston	Corresponding Station	Run Time to Boston
1 – Lower Investment	NORTH ADAMS	3:55	Pittsfield	3:56
	GREENFIELD	2:36	Springfield	2:20
	FITCHBURG	1:02	Worcester	0:56
2 – Higher Investment	NORTH ADAMS	2:48	Pittsfield	3:56
	GREENFIELD	2:01	Springfield	2:20
	FITCHBURG	0:58	Worcester	0:56
3 – Electrified Service	NORTH ADAMS	2:50	Pittsfield	3:56
	GREENFIELD	2:03	Springfield	2:20
	ATHOL / ORANGE	1:36	N.A.	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	0:58	Worcester	0:56
	AYER	0:43	N.A.	N.A.
4 – Full Local Service	NORTH ADAMS	2:59	Pittsfield	3:56
	SHELBURNE FALLS	2:26	N.A.	N.A.
	GREENFIELD	2:08	Springfield	2:20
	ATHOL / ORANGE	1:40	N.A.	N.A.
	GARDNER	1:19	N.A.	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	0:58	Worcester	0:56
5 – Albany Extension / Albany Connector	ALBANY	4:33	Albany-Rensselaer	4:57
	NORTH ADAMS	2:49	Pittsfield	3:56
	GREENFIELD	2:01	Springfield	2:20
	FITCHBURG	0:58	Worcester	0:56
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg With Transfer Between MBTA Commuter Rail and NTPR at Fitchburg	NORTH ADAMS	3:21	Pittsfield	3:56
	GREENFIELD	2:34	Springfield	2:20
	ATHOL / ORANGE	2:06	N.A.	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	1:28	Worcester	0:56

Model Results

The estimated model was utilized to project average boardings for a potential NTPR service at each of the stations across the six alternatives. For each station, the baseline boarding estimate is also accompanied by lower- and upper-bound boarding estimates. These values correspond to higher and lower boarding estimates of the MBTA boarding model according to the 95% confidence interval of the model parameters.

Boarding results from the model are summarized in Table 4. Values shown are forecast lower-bound, average, and upper-bound annual boardings by station for each of the NTPR service alternatives. Every boarding and its associated alighting is considered one rider. Thus, ridership is defined as the sum of boardings at all NTPR stations.

Higher ridership in alternative 2 with higher investment, compared to alternative 1, is due to shorter travel times. Among the six alternatives examined, the highest ridership is achieved in alternative 3 due to a combination of faster travel times resulting from electrified service and two additional stops at Athol/Orange and Ayer. In alternative 4, gains from these two additional station stops are offset by longer travel times associated with diesel rather than electric operation.

Serving Albany in alternative 5 also yields a higher ridership than alternative 1. One implication of this model result is that, with extending NTPR to Albany, there will be about 7 to 11 trips just between Albany and Boston every day – in both directions³, excluding those made via Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited*.

The last alternative, 6, requires almost half of the NTPR passengers to transfer at Fitchburg to continue on to North Station/Boston and vice versa. More specifically, those who travel between NTPR stations west of Fitchburg and stations east of Fitchburg would be required to transfer between NTPR and MBTA commuter rail. By using MBTA commuter rail, travelers incur a 30-minute increase in travel time between Fitchburg and Boston over the NTPR service, plus additional dwell time at Fitchburg awaiting connecting trains and the physical inconvenience associated with having to transfer between trains. To reflect these impacts, 10 minutes transfer penalty and 5 minutes wait time were added to the travel time for such passengers. These values reflect a well-synchronized transfer at Fitchburg to a degree that, while common in Europe, is rare in the US. Nonetheless, the model shows that the transfer and associated substantial increase in travel time is unfavorable and severely impacts the attractiveness of the service to potential users.

Table 5 contrasts ridership at Massachusetts stations of Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited* long-distance train against that of NTPR Alternative 1. In the chart, each station on NTPR is matched with an LSL station that has a similar distance to Boston as the NTPR counterpart. The LSL and NTPR routes parallel each other across the state approximately 50 miles apart, with the former route roughly paralleling the Massachusetts Turnpike. The daily LSL links Amtrak's Chicago hub with Boston, providing direct service to many more markets (21), and with a far larger population base. That includes service to Worcester and Springfield, the Commonwealth's second and third largest cities, respectively.

³ The estimate for Albany only includes traffic associated with the Albany region due to geographic limitations of the StreetLight data used for this study. It thus does not include potential connecting traffic from other regions such as the New York metropolitan region.

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 4 Alternatives Projected Annual Boardings – Inbound and Outbound

Alternative	Stations	Annual NTPR Boardings, Balanced			
		Lower Bound	Average	Upper Bound	Range
1 – Lower Investment	NORTH ADAMS	590	860	1,130	590 - 1,130
	GREENFIELD	4,370	6,540	8,720	4,370 - 8,720
	FITCHBURG	29,710	39,260	48,810	29,710 - 48,810
	BOSTON	31,210	42,000	52,800	31,210 - 52,800
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	65,880	88,660	111,460	65,880 - 111,460
2 – Higher Investment	NORTH ADAMS	9,730	10,690	11,660	9,730 - 11,660
	GREENFIELD	11,890	13,870	15,850	11,890 - 15,850
	FITCHBURG	31,430	40,960	50,500	31,430 - 50,500
	BOSTON	47,730	58,960	70,190	47,730 - 70,190
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	100,780	124,480	148,200	100,780 - 148,200
3 – Electrified Service	NORTH ADAMS	9,390	10,420	11,440	9,390 - 11,440
	GREENFIELD	11,300	13,300	15,290	11,300 - 15,290
	ATHOL / ORANGE	14,310	17,130	19,940	14,310 - 19,940
	FITCHBURG	32,260	42,260	52,270	32,260 - 52,270
	AYER	36,170	48,680	61,180	36,170 - 61,180
	BOSTON	93,090	118,590	144,080	93,090 - 144,080
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	196,520	250,380	304,200	196,520 - 304,200
4 – Full Local Service	NORTH ADAMS	6,640	7,270	7,920	6,640 - 7,920
	SHELburnE FALLS	6,410	6,700	6,950	6,410 - 6,950
	GREENFIELD	10,440	12,530	14,620	10,440 - 14,620
	ATHOL / ORANGE	13,520	16,460	19,370	13,520 - 19,370
	GARDNER	19,840	27,260	34,660	19,840 - 34,660
	FITCHBURG	31,600	41,270	50,950	31,600 - 50,950
	BOSTON	79,590	100,290	120,990	79,590 - 120,990
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	168,040	211,780	255,460	168,040 - 255,460
5 – Albany Extension / Albany Connector	ALBANY	1,570	1,970	2,350	1,570 - 2,350
	NORTH ADAMS	8,550	9,270	9,980	8,550 - 9,980
	GREENFIELD	11,780	13,990	16,200	11,780 - 16,200
	FITCHBURG	30,920	40,460	49,980	30,920 - 49,980
	BOSTON	47,520	59,090	70,650	47,520 - 70,650
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	100,340	124,780	149,160	100,340 - 149,160
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg With Transfer Between MBTA Commuter Rail and NTPR at Fitchburg	NORTH ADAMS	70	480	1,140	70 - 1,140
	GREENFIELD	310	2,190	4,090	310 - 4,090
	ATHOL / ORANGE	1,620	4,320	7,030	1,620 - 7,030
	FITCHBURG, Outbound	90	350	620	90 - 620
	Transfer from MBTA Commuter to NTPR at FITCHBURG	1,810	6,300	11,020	1,810 - 11,020
	TOTAL RIDERSHIP	3,900	13,640	23,900	3,900 - 23,900

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 5 Comparison Between NTPR Projected Annual Boardings and Lake Shore Limited Rail Boardings

Alternative	Station	Average Annual Boardings	
		NTPR Estimate	Lake Shore Limited Corresponding Station: Ridership in 2019
1 – Lower Investment	NORTH ADAMS	860	Pittsfield: 8,930
	GREENFIELD	6,540	Springfield: 17,160
	FITCHBURG	39,260	Worcester: 6,510
Sum		46,660	32,600
2 – Higher Investment	NORTH ADAMS	10,690	Pittsfield: 8,930
	GREENFIELD	13,870	Springfield: 17,160
	FITCHBURG	40,960	Worcester: 6,510
Sum		65,520	32,600
3 – Electrified Service	NORTH ADAMS	10,420	Pittsfield: 8,930
	GREENFIELD	13,300	Springfield: 17,160
	ATHOL / ORANGE	17,130	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	42,260	Worcester: 6,510
	AYER	48,680	N.A.
Sum		131,790	N.A.
4 – Full Local Service	NORTH ADAMS	7,270	Pittsfield: 8,930
	SHELBURNE FALLS	6,700	N.A.
	GREENFIELD	12,530	Springfield: 17,160
	ATHOL / ORANGE	16,460	N.A.
	GARDNER	27,260	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	41,270	Worcester: 6,510
Sum		111,490	N.A.
5 – Albany Extension / Albany Connector	ALBANY	1,970	Albany-Rensselaer: 78,040
	NORTH ADAMS	9,270	Pittsfield: 8,930
	GREENFIELD	13,990	Springfield: 17,160
	FITCHBURG	40,460	Worcester: 6,510
Sum		65,690	110,640
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg (Connect to MBTA Fitchburg Line)	NORTH ADAMS	480	Pittsfield: 8,930
	GREENFIELD	2,190	Springfield: 17,160
	ATHOL / ORANGE	4,320	N.A.
	FITCHBURG	6,650	Worcester: 6,510
Sum		13,640	N.A.

Intra-Corridor Trips

The boarding model predicts the number of boardings at each of the proposed stations. To predict trips between emistations, they need to be distributed (e.g., North Adams to Greenfield). To do so, recent travel patterns on the Downeaster service were analyzed and applied to the

NTPR stations. The Downeaster service has Boston as its anchor destination and similar to the commuter rail system is oriented for travel to Boston. Inter-station trips on the Downeaster are about 22 percent of total trips to Boston. Due to different population densities between areas that Downeaster serves along the New Hampshire and Maine coastal region, as opposed to more farther spaced NTPR stations, non-Boston inter-station trips on NTPR were estimated to be 10 percent of total trips. The 10% number represents a reasonable estimate of the intrazonal trips. This number is based, in part, on the distances between each line's train stations. The Downeaster service contains 11 stations with an average distance between stations of 20 minutes. The NTPR service has from 4 to 8 stations depending on the alternative. The average travel time for these stations ranges from 78 minutes (Alternative 1) to 30 minutes (Alternative 4).

This process involved identifying Downeaster stations that entailed similar travel times to Boston and, for these stations, non-Boston stations that had similar travel times as non-Boston NTPR stations. Figure 2 shows the grouping of Downeaster to NTPR stations based on travel times for Alternative 1.

Figure 2 Sample Downeaster to Northern Tier Railroad Travel Time Groupings



Travel times to Downeaster non-Boston stations for the NTPR similar stations were reviewed to find non-Boston (intra-corridor) stations that have comparable travel times for each of the NTPR stations and the like Downeaster stations across all alternatives. Table 6 shows the alternatives with their stations along the NTPR and the corresponding Downeaster station used for intra-

corridor allocation, with station's travel time to Boston. More detailed information on the origin and destination pairing of the NTPR and Downeaster is located in Appendix C.

Table 6 Downeaster Surrogate Stations for Intra-Corridor Trip Processing

Alternative	NTPR		Downeaster	
	Time	Station	Time	Station
1 – Lower Investment	235	North Adams	200	Brunswick
	156	Greenfield	152	Portland
	62	Fitchburg	71	Exeter
2 – Higher Investment	168	North Adams	152	Portland
	121	Greenfield	130	Saco
	58	Fitchburg	50	Haverhill
3 – Electrified Service	170	North Adams	187	Freeport
	123	Greenfield	130	Saco
	97	Athol/Orange	93	Dover
	60	Fitchburg	50	Haverhill
	44	Ayer	50	Haverhill
4 – Full Local Service	179	North Adams	187	Freeport
	147	Shelburne Falls	152	Portland
	129	Greenfield	130	Saco
	101	Athol/Orange	93	Dover
	80	Gardner	85	Durham
	59	Fitchburg	50	Haverhill
5 –Albany Extension / Albany Connector	274	Albany	200	Brunswick
	169	North Adams	152	Portland
	121	Greenfield	130	Saco
	59	Fitchburg	50	Haverhill
6 –North Adams to Fitchburg With Transfer Between MBTA and Northern Tier at Fitchburg	202	North Adams	200	Brunswick
	154	Greenfield	152	Portland
	126	Athol/Orange	130	Saco
	88	Fitchburg	85	Durham

The trips are allocated across the intra-corridor stations by first creating an origin-destination factor for each intra-corridor pair. This factor is determined by the number of Downeaster trips between the OD pair divided by the sum of the Downeaster origin and destination populations. This process weights the OD pair based on the number of observed trips and takes into account the differences in the OD populations.

The OD factors are multiplied by the NTPR destination population to estimate OD trips. From these OD trips the shares of trips across the NTPR intra-corridor stations are calculated and then applied to the total intra-corridor trips for each NTPR origin station to estimate the NTPR intra-corridor trips. These estimates can be found below in Table 7 through Table 12.

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 7 Origin-Destination Estimates – Lower Investment. Total Ridership = 88,660.

Alt. 1	North Adams	Greenfield	Fitchburg	Boston	Total Boardings
North Adams	0	30	260	570	860
Greenfield	30	0	2,040	4,470	6,540
Fitchburg	260	2,040	0	36,960	39,260
Boston	570	4,470	36,960	0	42,000
Total Alightings	860	6,540	39,260	42,000	88,660

Table 8 Origin-Destination Estimates – Higher Investment. Total Ridership = 124,480.

Alt. 2	North Adams	Greenfield	Fitchburg	Boston	Total Boardings
North Adams	0	390	1,250	9,050	10,690
Greenfield	390	0	1,640	11,840	13,870
Fitchburg	1,250	1,640	0	38,070	40,960
Boston	9,050	11,840	38,070	0	58,960
Total Alightings	10,690	13,870	40,960	58,960	124,480

Table 9 Origin-Destination Estimates – Electrified Service. Total Ridership = 250,380.

Alt. 3	North Adams	Greenfield	Athol/Orange	Fitchburg	Ayer	Boston	Total Boardings
North Adams	0	140	180	450	530	9,120	10,420
Greenfield	140	0	230	580	670	11,680	13,300
Athol/Orange	180	230	0	750	870	15,100	17,130
Fitchburg	450	580	750	0	2,200	38,280	42,260
Ayer	530	670	870	2,200	0	44,410	48,680
Boston	9,120	11,680	15,100	38,280	44,410	0	118,590
Total Alightings	10,420	13,300	17,130	42,260	48,680	118,590	250,380

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 10 Origin-Destination Estimates – Full Local Service. Total Ridership = 211,780.

Alt 4	North Adams	Shelburne Falls	Greenfield	Athol/Orange	Gardner	Fitchburg	Boston	Total Boardings
North Adams	0	60	100	140	230	350	6,390	7,270
Shelburne Falls	60	0	100	130	210	330	5,870	6,700
Greenfield	100	100	0	240	400	610	11,080	12,530
Athol/Orange	140	130	240	0	530	810	14,610	16,460
Gardner	230	210	400	530	0	1,360	24,530	27,260
Fitchburg	350	330	610	810	1,360	0	37,810	41,270
Boston	6,390	5,870	11,080	14,610	24,530	37,810	0	100,290
Total Alightings	7,270	6,700	12,530	16,460	27,260	41,270	100,290	211,780

Table 11 Origin-Destination Estimates – Albany Extension / Albany Connector. Total Ridership = 124,780.

Alt 5	Albany	North Adams	Greenfield	Fitchburg	Boston	Total Boardings
Albany	0	50	70	220	1,630	1,970
North Adams	50	0	330	1,040	7,850	9,270
Greenfield	70	330	0	1,590	12,000	13,990
Fitchburg	220	1,040	1,590	0	37,610	40,460
Boston	1,630	7,850	12,000	37,610	0	59,090
Total Alightings	1,970	9,270	13,990	40,460	59,090	124,780

NTPR Ridership Estimation

Table 12 Origin-Destination Estimates – North Adams to Fitchburg With Transfer Between MBTA Commuter Rail and NTPR at Fitchburg.

Total Ridership = 13,640.

Alt. 6	North Adams	Greenfield	Athol/Orange	Fitchburg	Transfer to Commuter Rail - Boston	Total Boardings
North Adams	0	10	30	20	420	480
Greenfield	10	0	130	110	1,940	2,190
Athol/Orange	30	130	0	220	3,940	4,320
Fitchburg	20	110	220	0	0	350
MBTA Commuter Rail Transfers	420	1,940	3,940	0	0	6,300
Total Alightings	480	2,190	4,320	350	6,300	13,640

Future Ridership

The ridership forecast for the year 2040 were developed based on the estimated growth in population, households, and employment within the station catchment areas. Overall ridership for each service alternative is estimated to be lower for each service alternative due to the reduction in in the population and employment forecasted for the western section of the corridor. The full 2040 forecasted ridership for each alternative is provided in Appendix D. The ridership numbers for 2040 use baseline projected socioeconomic data that does not reflect changes due to the rail service operation and as such do not include any induced demand.

Seasonality

The estimates developed in this analysis are annual, and in reality there will be seasonal fluctuations in ridership. MassDOT has [seasonal adjustment factors](#) based on traffic counts by month. These were used to estimate potential fluctuations in travel on the corridor.

Using the “Recreational West” trip grouping, seasonal fluctuations are inferred by the monthly adjustment factors. A seasonal adjustment factor in the winter of 1.21 means that the traffic is multiplied by 1.21 in order to be adjusted, or, put differently, it is 83 percent of the average monthly traffic counts ($1 / 1.21 = 0.83$). Similarly, the summer adjustment factor of 0.79 equates to 126 percent of average monthly traffic counts ($1 / 0.79 = 1.26$).

Table 13 Seasonal Adjustment Factors

Month	Rec - West	Seasonal Average
JAN	1.30	1.21
FEB	1.23	
MAR	1.32	
APR	1.18	
MAY	0.95	0.79
JUN	0.82	
JUL	0.70	
AUG	0.69	
SEP	0.97	
OCT	0.96	
NOV	1.16	1.21
DEC	2.25	

The calculation in Table 13 implies that the summer months could have a roughly 26 percent increase above the average monthly ridership and the winter months could have a 17 percent decrease from average monthly ridership. For estimation purposes, a +/- 20 percent seasonal variation is an appropriate assumption for the proposed service.

Appendix E

Cost Estimation

TRACK WORK				
A	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Intall New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	13728 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 631,899.84
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track				
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track				
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
Total A:				\$ 6,899,335.00

Track Construction - Greenfield/Deerfield,				
B	MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track from 385.2 to 389.1				
	Intall New Ballast (12" thick)	5850 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 292,500.00
	Install new Rail	20592 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,544,400.00
	Install New Ties	12674 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,901,100.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	25348 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,400.00
	Flashbutt Welds	528 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 264,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track				
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1430 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,469,468.00
	Excavation	5720.0 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 143,000.00
	Backfill	3432.0 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 109,824.00
Modify CPF 385 to accommodate second track				
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
Construction new Interlocking at CPF 389				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 87,430.00 /EA	\$ 87,430.00
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
Total B:				\$ 8,234,831.32

[illegible]

Surface & Align	31,680.00	LF	\$	46.03	/LF	\$	1,458,230.40
Total C:						\$	5,964,441.67

D	State of good repair to remove slow orders	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast				
	Install New Ties	87068 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 4,353,400.00
	Install New Ballast	87068 TN	\$ 150.00 /TN	\$ 13,060,200.00
	Surface & Align	1,225,910 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 56,428,637.30
Total D:				\$ 69,488,837.30

E	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers			
	Demolish Existing Turnout	5 EA	\$ 52,421.76 /EA	\$ 262,108.80
	Install #10 Turnout	5 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 818,837.80
	Total E:			\$ 1,080,946.60

F	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview			
	Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	182.40 ACRE	\$ 36,000.00 /A	\$ 6,566,400.00
	Total F:			\$ 6,566,400.00

G	Layover Facility - North Adams, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3333.333 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 166,666.67
	Install new Rail	5000 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 375,000.00
	Install New Ties	3077 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 461,550.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	6154 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 307,700.00
	Flashbutt Welds	129 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 64,500.00
	Surface & Align	5000 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 230,150.00
	Install No. 20 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Install No. 10 Turnout	2 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 327,535.12
	Install No. 8 Turnout	3 EA	\$ 102,078.23 /EA	\$ 306,234.69
	Bumping Posts	4 EA	\$ 3,500.00 /EA	\$ 14,000.00
	Switch Derail	4 EA	\$ 3,200.00 /EA	\$ 12,800.00
Replace Northern Track	Demo Existing Ties	1650 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 82,500.00
	Install New Ties	1650 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 247,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	3300 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 165,000.00
	Demo Existing Rail	2680 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 124,325.20
	Install new Rail	2680 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 201,000.00
	Joint Demo	69 EA	\$ 414.91 /EA	\$ 28,628.79
	Thermite Weld	69 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 34,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	2680 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 156,485.20
	Install New Ballast	1786.667 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 89,333.33
Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks	Clear & Grub	7.5 A	\$ 40,000.00 /A	\$ 300,000.00
	Grading	36550 SY	\$ 2.00 /SY	\$ 73,100.00
	Excavation for track subgrade	24368 CY	\$ 45.00 /CY	\$ 1,096,554.83
Access Road	Rubber Rail Seal	4000 TF	\$ 389.30 /TF	\$ 1,557,200.00
	Subbase	2104.61 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 67,347.53
	Grading	9423.63 SY	\$ 2.00 /SY	\$ 18,847.26
	Paving	9423.63 SY	\$ 150.00 /SY	\$ 1,413,544.17
Total H:				\$ 8,130,530.37

H	Bridge Rehabilitations	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Bridge Rehabilitations			

\$	5,964,441.67		
\$	69,488,837.30		
\$	1,080,946.60		
\$	6,566,400.00		
\$	98,112,916.91	\$ 188,975,289.25	Track subtotal
\$	8,130,530.37	\$ 15,660,214.55	Layover Subtotal

Low Build Scenario

# of Bridges		97 ea	\$ 2,300,000.00 /EA	\$ 223,100,000.00
Total H:				\$ 223,100,000.00
I	Signal Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Signal Replacement				
	Single Track Wayside Signal	11 ea	\$ 282,782.00 /EA	\$ 3,110,602.00
	Double Track Wayside Signal	8 ea	\$ 378,921.00 /EA	\$ 3,031,368.00
	Tie-In Case Wayside Signal	14 ea	\$ 54,895.00 /EA	\$ 768,530.00
	End of Siding Wayside Signal	10 ea	\$ 1,142,825.00 /EA	\$ 11,428,250.00
	Modifying Existing Interlocking	2 ea	\$ 410,588.00 /EA	\$ 821,176.00
	Convert Electric Lock	13 ea	\$ 129,490.00 /EA	\$ 1,683,370.00
	Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail	1 ea	\$ 185,248.00 /EA	\$ 185,248.00
	Insulated Joints	102 ea	\$ 3,159.72 /EA	\$ 322,291.44
Total I:				\$ 21,350,835.44
J	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super		rebuild track and road		
	Single Track	6 EA	\$ 346,392.00 /EA	\$ 2,078,352.00
	Double Track	5 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 2,082,940.00
	Speed Update (Single Track)	3 EA	\$ 25,000.00 /EA	\$ 75,000.00
	Speed Update (Double Track)	1 EA	\$ 50,000.00 /EA	\$ 50,000.00
Replace Rail				
	Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,600.00
	Install New Ties	32 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 4,800.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,200.00
	Demo Existing Rail	480 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 22,267.20
	Install new Rail	480 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 36,000.00
	Mechanical Joints	32 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 11,200.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	480 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 28,027.20
	Install New Ballast	320 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 16,000.00
	Surface & Align	480 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 22,094.40
Total J:				\$ 4,431,480.80
K	PTC	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
PTC Implementation				
	PTC Implementation	1 LS	\$ 45,963,527.00 /EA	\$ 45,963,527.00
Total K:				\$ 45,963,527.00
L	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum				
	Station Modification	1 LS	12000000 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00
Total L:				\$ 12,000,000.00
M	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Demo Rail	20833 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (121,874.98)
	Total M:			\$ (121,874.98)

Running Total:	\$ 413,089,290.52
50% Contingency:	\$ 206,544,645.26
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$ 61,963,393.58
Vehicle Allowance:	\$ 65,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$ 131,996,366.80
Total Cost:	\$ 878,593,696
	\$ 918,152,531.00

\$ 223,100,000.00		\$ 429,712,910.00	Bridge Total
\$ 21,350,835.44		\$ 41,123,844.14	Signals Subtotal
\$ 4,431,480.80		\$ 8,535,475.17	Track Subtotal #2
\$ 45,963,527.00		\$ 88,530,349.35	Signals PTC Subtotal
		\$ 129,654,193.50	Signals total
\$ 12,000,000.00		\$ 23,113,200.00	Stations Subtotal
		\$ 38,773,414.55	Layover + Stations Total
		\$ 197,510,764.42	Track total
\$ (121,874.98)		\$ 197,388,889.44	Track Net of salvage Total



Low Build Scenario

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total	
Track Work	\$ 98,112,916.91	\$ 49,056,458.45	\$ 14,716,937.54		\$27,088,137.77	\$ 188,974,450.67	
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13	
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 71,745,843.24	\$ 35,872,921.62	\$ 10,761,876.49		\$19,808,414.09	\$ 138,189,055.44	
Electrification	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$0.00	\$ -	
Stations	\$ 12,000,000.00	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00		\$3,313,097.43	\$ 23,113,097.43	
Layover	\$ 8,130,530.37	\$ 4,065,265.19	\$ 1,219,579.56		\$2,244,769.94	\$ 15,660,145.06	
Rolling Stock				\$65,000,000.00	\$17,945,944.43	\$ 82,945,944.43	
Total	\$ 413,089,290.52	\$ 206,544,645.26	\$ 61,963,393.58	\$65,000,000.00	\$131,996,366.80	\$ 878,593,696.16	
	\$ -						

Higher Build Scenario

TRACK WORK				
A	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track				
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track				
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
Total A:				\$ 7,215,284.92

\$ 7,215,284.92

B	Track Construction - Charlemont/Rowe, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3300 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 165,000.00
	Install new Rail	11616 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 871,200.00
	Install New Ties	7150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,072,546.15
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	14300.61538 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 715,030.77
	Flashbutt Welds	298 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 149,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track				
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1613.3 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,657,861.33
	Excavation	6453.3 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 161,333.33
	Backfill	3872.0 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 123,904.00
Modify Existing CPF 415 to accommodate second track				
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 411				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 87,430.00 /EA	\$ 87,430.00
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
Total B:				\$ 6,159,014.91

\$ 6,159,014.91

C	Rehabilitation of track from class 1 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	4150 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 207,500.00
	Install New Ties	4150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 622,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8300 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 415,000.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 635,245.18
	Install new Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,027,018.50
	Mechanical Joints	352 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 123,200.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	13693.58 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 799,568.14
	Install New Ballast	11670.66 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 583,533.24
Surfacing				

Higher Build Scenario

Surface & Align	41080.74	LF	\$	46.03	/LF	\$	1,890,946.46			
Total C:							\$	6,304,511.51	\$	6,304,511.51

D	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	39355 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,967,750.00
	Install New Ties	39355 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 5,903,250.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	78710 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,935,500.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 9,639,439.80
	Install new Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 15,584,349.75
	Mechanical Joints	5328 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,864,800.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	207791.33 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 12,132,935.76
	Install New Ballast	98386.05 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 4,919,302.32
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	415,582.66 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 19,129,269.84
Total D:				\$ 75,076,597.47

E	Rehabilitation of 10.86 miles of track from class 1 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	17376 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 868,800.00
	Install New Ties	17376 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 2,606,400.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	34752 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,737,600.00
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	114682 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 5,320,097.98
	Install new Rail	114682 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 8,601,150.00
	Mechanical Joints	2867 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,003,467.50
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	114682 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 6,696,281.98
	Install New Ballast	48870.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 2,443,500.00
Surfacing	Surface & Align	172022 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 7,918,172.66
Total E:				\$ 37,195,470.12

F	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	112411 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 5,620,550.00
	Install New Ties	112411 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 16,861,650.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	224822 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 11,241,100.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	913123 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 42,359,775.97
	Install new Rail	913123 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 68,484,225.00
	Mechanical Joints	22828 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 7,989,826.25
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	913123 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 53,317,251.97
	Install New Ballast	216175.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 10,808,750.00
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	913123 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 42,031,051.69
Total F:				\$ 258,714,180.88

G	Rehabilitation of track from class 3 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	22836 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,141,800.00
	Install New Ties	22836 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 3,425,400.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	45672 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 2,283,600.00
Rail				



Higher Build Scenario

Joint Elimination	Demo Existing Rail	109613 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	5,084,947.07		
	Install new Rail	109613 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	8,220,975.00		
Ballast	Joint Demo	2803 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	1,162,992.73		
	Thermite Weld	2803 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	1,401,500.00		
Surfacing	Remove Existing Ballast	109613 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	6,400,303.07		
	Install New Ballast	31140.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	1,557,000.00		
	Surface & Align	219226 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	10,090,972.78		
Total G:						\$ 40,769,490.65	\$	40,769,490.65

H	State of Good Repair to Remove Slow Orders	Takeoff Qty		Unit Price	Total Cost				
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast									
	Install New Ballast	8353.31	TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$	417,665.72			
	Surface & Align	88,211.00	LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$	4,060,352.33			
	Total H:					\$	4,478,018.05	\$	4,478,018.05

I	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost		
All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers						
	Demolish Existing Turnout	40 EA	\$ 52,421.76 /EA	\$ 2,096,870.40		
	Install No. 10 Turnout	40 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 6,550,702.40		
Total I:				\$ 8,647,572.80	\$	8,647,572.80

J	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost		
Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super						
	Single Track	10 EA	\$ 346,392.00 /EA	\$ 3,463,920.00		
	Double Track	6 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 2,499,528.00		
	Triple Track	1 EA	\$ 499,905.60 /EA	\$ 499,905.60		
	Speed Update (Single Track)	10 EA	\$ 25,000.00 /EA	\$ 250,000.00		
	Speed Update (Double Track and Triple Track)	7 EA	\$ 50,000.00 /EA	\$ 350,000.00		
Replace Rail						
	Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,600.00		
	Install New Ties	32 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 4,800.00		
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,200.00		
	Demo Existing Rail	750 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 34,792.50		
	Install new Rail	750 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 56,250.00		
	Mechanical Joints	50 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 17,500.00		
	Remove Existing Ballast	750 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 43,792.50		
	Install New Ballast	639 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 31,960.23		
	Surface & Align	750 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 34,522.50		
Total J:				\$ 7,291,771.33	\$	7,291,771.33

K	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty		Unit Price		Total Cost	
	increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview						
	Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	390.18	ACRE	\$	36,000.00 /A	\$	14,046,458.43
Total K:						\$	14,046,458.43

L	Timber Bridge Deck Ties	Takeoff Qty		Unit Price	Total Cost	
Timber Bridge Deck Ties						
	Required to increase track class	1500 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	225,000.00
Total L:					\$	225,000.00
					\$	225,000.00

M	Culvert Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost			
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Higher Build Scenario

Culvert Replacement							
Remove & Replace Existing Culvert		6 EA	\$	830,000.00 /LS	\$	4,980,000.00	
Total M:					\$	4,980,000.00	\$ 455,841,952.22
							\$ 877,997,184.16 Track subtotal
N Layover Facility - North Adams, MA							
Construct new track							
Install New Ballast (12" thick)		3666.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	183,333.33	
Install new Rail		5500 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	412,500.00	
Install New Ties		3385 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	507,750.00	
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly		6770 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	338,500.00	
Flashbutt Welds		142 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	71,000.00	
Surface & Align		5500 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	253,165.00	
Install No. 20 Turnout		1 EA	\$	208,527.60 /EA	\$	208,527.60	
Install No. 10 Turnout		2 EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$	327,535.12	
Install No. 8 Turnout		3 EA	\$	102,078.23 /EA	\$	306,234.69	
Bumping Posts		4 EA	\$	3,500.00 /EA	\$	14,000.00	
Switch Derail		4 EA	\$	3,200.00 /EA	\$	12,800.00	
Replace Northern Track							
Demo Existing Ties		1650 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	82,500.00	
Install New Ties		1650 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	247,500.00	
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly		3300 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	165,000.00	
Demo Existing Rail		2680 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	124,325.20	
Install new Rail		2680 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	201,000.00	
Joint Demo		69 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	28,628.79	
Thermite Weld		69 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	34,500.00	
Remove Existing Ballast		2680 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	156,485.20	
Install New Ballast		1786.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	89,333.33	
Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks							
Clear & Grub		7.5 A	\$	40,000.00 /A	\$	300,000.00	
Grading		36550 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$	73,100.00	
Excavation for track subgrade		24368 CY	\$	45.00 /CY	\$	1,096,554.83	
Access Road							
Rubber Rail Seal		4000 TF	\$	389.30 /TF	\$	1,557,200.00	
Subbase		2104.61 CY	\$	32.00 /CY	\$	67,347.53	
Grading		9423.63 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$	18,847.26	
Paving		9423.63 SY	\$	150.00 /SY	\$	1,413,544.17	
Total N:					\$	8,291,212.04	\$ 15,969,703.51 Layover Subtotal
O Bridge Rehabilitations							
Takeoff Qty		Unit Price		Total Cost			
Bridge Rehabilitations							
# of Bridges		97 ea	\$	2,300,000.00 /EA	\$	223,100,000.00	
Total O:					\$	223,100,000.00	\$ 429,712,910.00 Bridge Total
P Signal Replacement							
Takeoff Qty		Unit Price		Total Cost			
Signal Replacement							
Single Track Wayside Signal		12 ea	\$	282,782.00 /EA	\$	3,393,384.00	
Double Track Wayside Signal		8 ea	\$	378,921.00 /EA	\$	3,031,368.00	
Tie-In Case Wayside Signal		15 ea	\$	54,895.00 /EA	\$	823,425.00	
End of Siding Wayside Signal		9 ea	\$	1,142,825.00 /EA	\$	10,285,425.00	
Modifying Existing Interlocking		1 ea	\$	410,588.00 /EA	\$	410,588.00	
Convert Electric Lock		13 ea	\$	129,490.00 /EA	\$	1,683,370.00	
Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail		1 ea	\$	185,248.00 /EA	\$	185,248.00	
Insulated Joints		104 ea	\$	3,159.72 /EA	\$	328,610.88	
Total P:					\$	20,141,418.88	\$ 38,794,386.90 Signal Subtotal
Q PTC							
Takeoff Qty		Unit Price		Total Cost			
PTC Implementation							
PTC Implementation		1 LS	\$	45,963,527.00 /EA	\$	45,963,527.00	

Higher Build Scenario

Total Q:				\$	45,963,527.00	\$	45,963,527.00	\$	88,530,349.35	Signal PTX Subtotal
								\$	127,324,736.26	Signal Total
R	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost						
North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum Station Modification		1 LS	\$ 12,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00						
Total R:				\$	12,000,000.00	\$	12,000,000.00	\$	23,113,200.00	Stations
								\$	39,082,903.51	Layover + Stations Total
S	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost						
Demo Rail		1362333 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (7,969,647.52)						
Total V:				\$	(7,969,647.52)	\$	(7,969,647.52)	\$	877,997,184.16	Track total
								\$	870,027,536.64	Track Net of salvage Total

Running Total:	\$	772,629,881.46
50% Contingency:	\$	386,314,940.73
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$	115,894,482.22
Vehicle Allowance:	\$	65,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$	231,262,450.91
Total Cost:	\$	1,571,101,755
		\$ 1,610,660,590.00

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total
Track Work	\$ 455,841,952.22	\$ 227,920,976.11	\$ 68,376,292.83		\$125,854,066.85	\$ 877,993,288.00
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 73,396,717.21	\$ 36,698,358.60	\$ 11,009,507.58		\$20,264,206.29	\$ 141,368,789.68
Electrification		\$ -	\$ -		\$0.00	\$ -
Stations	\$ 12,000,000.00	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00		\$3,313,097.43	\$ 23,113,097.43
Layover	\$ 8,291,212.04	\$ 4,145,606.02	\$ 1,243,681.81		\$2,289,132.78	\$ 15,969,632.64
Rolling Stock				\$65,000,000.00	\$17,945,944.43	\$ 82,945,944.43
Total	\$ 772,629,881.46	\$ 386,314,940.73	\$115,894,482.22	\$65,000,000.00	\$231,262,450.91	\$ 1,571,101,755.32
	\$ -					

Alternative 3

A	Track Construction - Charlemont/Rowe, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	4455 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 222,750.00
	Install new Rail	15682 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,176,150.00
	Install New Ties	9801 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,470,187.50
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	19602.5 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 980,125.00
	Flashbutt Welds	298 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 149,000.00
	Surface & Align	15682 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 721,842.46
Realign main line to accomodate second track				
	Surface and realign	15682 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 673,228.26
Relocated existing fiber optic (?) utility adjacent to existng main track				
	Relocate	15682 LF	\$ 4.20 /LF	\$ 65,864.40
Bozrah Brook UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00
Chickley River UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00
Rebuild West Hawley Rd (Rt 8A) grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild Towers Rd grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild farm crossing				
	Double Track	1 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 416,588.00
Construct new Interlocking at CPF 406				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00
Construct new Interlocking at CPF 409				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00
Total A:				\$ 12,757,550.82

B	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
	Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track			
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
	Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track			
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
	Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
Total B:				

C	Rehabilitation of track from class 1 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	4150 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 207,500.00
	Install New Ties	4150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 622,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8300 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 415,000.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 635,245.18
	Install new Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,027,018.50
	Mechanical Joints	352 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 123,200.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	13693.58 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 799,568.14
	Install New Ballast	11670.66 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 583,533.24
Surfacing				

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Only Applies to High Bookend, not needed here

Alternative 3

H	State of Good Repair to Remove Slow Orders	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast				
Install New Ballast	8353.31 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 417,665.72	
Surface & Align	88,211.00 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 4,060,352.33	
Total H:			\$ 4,478,018.05	

I	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers				
	Demolish Existing Turnout	40 EA	\$ 52,421.76 /EA	\$ 2,096,870.40
	Install No. 10 Turnout	40 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 6,550,702.40
Total I:				\$ 8,647,572.80

J	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super			
	Single Track	10 EA	\$ 346,392.00 /EA	\$ 3,463,920.00
	Double Track	6 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 2,499,528.00
	Triple Track	1 EA	\$ 499,905.60 /EA	\$ 499,905.60
	Speed Update (Single Track)	10 EA	\$ 25,000.00 /EA	\$ 250,000.00
	Speed Update (Double Track and Triple Track)	7 EA	\$ 50,000.00 /EA	\$ 350,000.00
	Replace Rail			
	Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,600.00
	Install New Ties	32 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 4,800.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,200.00
	Demo Existing Rail	750 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 34,792.50
	Install new Rail	750 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 56,250.00
	Mechanical Joints	50 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 17,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	750 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 43,792.50
	Install New Ballast	639 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 31,960.23
	Surface & Align	750 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 34,522.50
	Total J:			\$ 7,291,771.33

K	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview			
	Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	390.18 ACRE	\$ 36,000.00 /A	\$ 14,046,458.43
	Total K:			\$ 14,046,458.43

L	Timber Bridge Deck Ties	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Timber Bridge Deck Ties			
	Required to increase track class	1500 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 225,000.00
	Total L:			\$ 225,000.00

M	Culvert Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Culvert Replacement			
	Remove & Replace Existing Culvert	6 EA	\$ 830,000.00 /LS	\$ 4,980,000.00
	Total M:			\$ 4,980,000.00

N	Layover Facility - North Adams, MA				
Construct new track					
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3666.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 183,333.33
	Install new Rail	5500 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 412,500.00
	Install New Ties	3385 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 507,750.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	6770 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 338,500.00
	Flashbutt Welds	142 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 71,000.00
	Surface & Align	5500 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 253,165.00
	Install No. 20 Turnout	1 EA	\$	208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Install No. 10 Turnout	2 EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$ 327,535.12
	Install No. 8 Turnout	3 EA	\$	102,078.23 /EA	\$ 306,234.69
	Bumping Posts	4 EA	\$	3,500.00 /EA	\$ 14,000.00
	Switch Derail	4 EA	\$	3,200.00 /EA	\$ 12,800.00
Replace Northern Track					
	Demo Existing Ties	1650 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 82,500.00
	Install New Ties	1650 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 247,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	3300 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 165,000.00
	Demo Existing Rail	2680 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 124,325.20
	Install new Rail	2680 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 201,000.00
	Joint Demo	69 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$ 28,628.79
	Thermite Weld	69 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 34,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	2680 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 156,485.20

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Track subtotal

Alternative 3

Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks	Install New Ballast	1786.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	89,333.33
	Clear & Grub	7.5 A	\$	40,000.00 /A	\$	300,000.00
	Grading	36550 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$	73,100.00
	Excavation for track subgrade	24368 CY	\$	45.00 /CY	\$	1,096,554.83
Access Road						
	Rubber Rail Seal	4000 TF	\$	389.30 /TF	\$	1,557,200.00
	Subbase	2104.61 CY	\$	32.00 /CY	\$	67,347.53
	Grading	9423.63 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$	18,847.26
	Paving	9423.63 SY	\$	150.00 /SY	\$	1,413,544.17
Total N:					\$	8,291,212.04

O	Bridge Rehabilitations	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Bridge Rehabilitations			
	# of Bridges	97 ea	\$ 2,300,000.00 /EA	\$ 223,100,000.00

	Total O:	\$ 223,100,000.00
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P	Signal Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Signal Replacement				
	Single Track Wayside Signal	12 ea	\$ 282,782.00 /EA	\$ 3,393,384.00
	Double Track Wayside Signal	8 ea	\$ 378,921.00 /EA	\$ 3,031,368.00
	Tie-In Case Wayside Signal	15 ea	\$ 54,895.00 /EA	\$ 823,425.00
	End of Siding Wayside Signal	9 ea	\$ 1,142,825.00 /EA	\$ 10,285,425.00
	Modifying Existing Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 410,588.00 /EA	\$ 410,588.00
	Convert Electric Lock	13 ea	\$ 129,490.00 /EA	\$ 1,683,370.00
	Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail	1 ea	\$ 185,248.00 /EA	\$ 185,248.00
	Insulated Joints	104 ea	\$ 3,159.72 /EA	\$ 328,610.88

	Total P:	\$ 20,141,418.88
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Q	PTC	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	PTC Implementation			
	PTC Implementation	1 LS	\$ 45,963,527.00 /EA	\$ 45,963,527.00

Total Q:	\$ 45,963,527.00
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R	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum			
	Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 12,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00
	Athol Lump Sum			
	Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 6,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 6,000,000.00

	Total R:	\$ 18,000,000.00
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S	OCS	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Overhead	Contact System - Electrification			
	OCS Electrification (Single Track) - CPF335 to North Adams	76.92 Mile	\$ 3,000,000.00 /Mile	\$ 230,760,000.00
	OCS Electrification (Double Track) - CPF335 to North Adams	68.52 Mile	\$ 3,000,000.00 /Mile	\$ 205,560,000.00

	Total \$:	\$ 436,320,000.00
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T	OCR	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Overhead Conductor Rail - Electrification			
	OCR Electrification	4.75 Mile	\$ 750,000.00 /Mile	\$ 3,562,500.00

	Total T:	\$ 3,562,500.00
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U	TPS	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Traction Power System - Electrification				
	Main Supply Subs	2 LS	\$ 30,000,000.00 /LS	\$ 60,000,000.00
	Switching Stations	1 LS	\$ 20,000,000.00 /LS	\$ 20,000,000.00
	Parallel Stations	15 LS	\$ 10,000,000.00 /LS	\$ 150,000,000.00
	Real Estate Cost	1 LS	\$ 17,500,000.00 /LS	\$ 17,500,000.00
	Utility Connection Allowance	1 LS	\$ 1,000,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,000,000.00

	Total U:	\$ 248,500,000.00
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V	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Demo Rail	1362333 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (7,969,647.52)

	Total V:	\$ (7,969,647.52)
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\$ 8,291,212.04
\$ 223,100,000.00
\$ 20,141,418.88
\$ 45,963,527.00
\$ 18,000,000.00
\$ 436,320,000.00
\$ 3,562,500.00
\$ 248,500,000.00
\$ (7,969,647.52)

\$	15,969,703.51
Layover Subtotal	
\$	429,712,910.00
Bridge Total	
\$	38,794,386.90
Signals Subtotal	
\$	88,530,349.35
Signals PTC Subtotal	
\$	127,324,736.26
Signals total	
\$	34,669,800.00
Stations	
\$	50,639,503.51
Layover + Stations Total	
\$	840,395,952.00
Elec-OCS - Subtotal	
\$	6,861,731.25
Elec-OCR - Subtotal	
\$	478,635,850.00
Elec-TPS subtotal	
\$	1,325,893,533.25
Electrical total	
\$	876,809,263.90
Track total	
\$	868,839,616.37
Track Net of salvage Total	

Alternative 3

Running Total:	\$ 1,466,395,632.45
50% Contingency:	\$ 733,197,816.23
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$ 219,959,344.87
Vehicle Allowance:	\$ 80,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$ 426,946,616.81
Total Cost:	\$ 2,926,499,410
	2,979,955,544

\$ 1,473,610,917.37
\$ 80,000,000.00

\$	2,838,321,987.95
\$	102,088,000.00
\$	2,940,409,987.95
\$	102,088,000.00
\$	141,647,100.00

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total
Track Work	\$ 455,225,203.21	\$ 227,612,601.60	\$ 68,283,780.48		\$125,683,787.72	\$ 876,805,373.01
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 73,396,717.21	\$ 36,698,358.60	\$ 11,009,507.58		\$20,264,206.29	\$ 141,368,789.68
Electrification	\$ 688,382,500.00	\$ 344,191,250.00	\$103,257,375.00		\$190,056,524.53	\$ 1,325,887,649.53
Stations	\$ 18,000,000.00	\$ 9,000,000.00	\$ 2,700,000.00		\$4,969,646.15	\$ 34,669,646.15
Layover	\$ 8,291,212.04	\$ 4,145,606.02	\$ 1,243,681.81		\$2,289,132.78	\$ 15,969,632.64
Rolling Stock				\$80,000,000.00	\$22,087,316.23	\$ 102,087,316.23
Total	\$ 1,466,395,632.45	\$ 733,197,816.23	\$219,959,344.87	\$80,000,000.00	\$426,946,616.81	\$ 2,926,499,410.36
	\$ -					

Alternative 4

A	Track Construction - Buckland, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3390 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 169,500.00
	Install new Rail	11880 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 891,000.00
	Install New Ties	7313 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,096,915.38
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	14625.53846 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 731,276.92
	Flashbutt Welds	305 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 152,500.00
	Surface & Align	11880 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 546,836.40
	Realign main line to accomodate second track			
	Surface and realign	11880 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 510,008.40
	Relocated existing fiber optic (?) utility adjacent to existng main track			
	Relocate	11880 LF	\$ 4.20 /LF	\$ 49,896.00
	Rebuild farm crossing			
	Double Track	1 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 416,588.00
	Modify Interlocking at CPF 402, replace turnout with crossover			
	Modify Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 422,039.00 /EA	\$ 422,039.00
	Construct new Interlocking at CPF 404			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00

Total A:	\$ 5,427,467.71
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B	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
	Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track			
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
	Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track			
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
	Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00

Total B:

C	Track Construction - Charlemont/Rowe, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3300 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 165,000.00
	Install new Rail	11616 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 871,200.00
	Install New Ties	7150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,072,546.15
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	14300.61538 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 715,030.77
	Flashbutt Welds	298 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 149,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
	Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track			
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1613.3 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,657,861.33
	Excavation	6453.3 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 161,333.33
	Backfill	3872.0 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 123,904.00
	Modify Existing CPF 415 to accommodate second track			
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
	Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 411			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 87,430.00 /EA	\$ 87,430.00
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00

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Only Applies to High Bookend, not needed here

Alternative 4

Grading	200 SY	\$	6.50 /SY	\$	1,300.00
Surface & Align	200 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	9,206.00

Total C:

D	Rehabilitation of track from class 1 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	4150 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 207,500.00
	Install New Ties	4150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 622,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8300 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 415,000.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 635,245.18
	Install new Rail	13693.58 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,027,018.50
	Mechanical Joints	352 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 123,200.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	13693.58 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 799,568.14
	Install New Ballast	11670.66 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 583,533.24
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	41080.74 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 1,890,946.46

	Total D:	\$ 6,304,511.51
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E	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	39355 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,967,750.00
	Install New Ties	39355 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 5,903,250.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	78710 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,935,500.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 9,639,439.80
	Install new Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 15,584,349.75
	Mechanical Joints	5328 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,864,800.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	207791.33 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 12,132,935.76
	Install New Ballast	98386.05 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 4,919,302.32
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	415,582.66 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 19,129,269.84

Total E:	\$ 75,076,597.47
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F	Rehabilitation of 10.86 miles of track from class 1 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	17376 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 868,800.00
	Install New Ties	17376 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 2,606,400.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	34752 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,737,600.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	114682 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 5,320,097.98
	Install new Rail	114682 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 8,601,150.00
	Mechanical Joints	2867 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,003,467.50
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	114682 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 6,696,281.98
	Install New Ballast	48870.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 2,443,500.00
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	172022 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 7,918,172.66

Total F:	\$ 37,195,470.12
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G	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	112411 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 5,620,550.00
	Install New Ties	112411 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 16,861,650.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	224822 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 11,241,100.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	913123 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 42,359,775.97
	Install new Rail	913123 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 68,484,225.00
	Mechanical Joints	22828 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 7,989,826.25
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	913123 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 53,317,251.97
	Install New Ballast	216175.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 10,808,750.00

[illegible][illegible]

Only Applies to High Bookend, not needed here

Alternative 4

Surfacing					
Surface & Align	913123	LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 42,031,051.69

Total G:	\$ 258,714,180.88
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H	Rehabilitation of track from class 3 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Ties					
Demo Existing Ties	22836 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	1,141,800.00
Install New Ties	22836 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	3,425,400.00
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	45672 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	2,283,600.00

Rail					
Demo Existing Rail	109613 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	5,084,947.07
Install new Rail	109613 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	8,220,975.00

Joint Elimination					
Joint Demo	2803 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	1,162,992.73
Thermite Weld	2803 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	1,401,500.00

Ballast					
Remove Existing Ballast	109613 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	6,400,303.07
Install New Ballast	31140.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	1,557,000.00

Surfacing					
Surface & Align	219226 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	10,090,972.78

Total H:	\$ 40,769,490.65
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I	State of Good Repair to Remove Slow Orders	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast				
Install New Ballast	8353.31 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 417,665.72	
Surface & Align	88,211.00 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 4,060,352.33	

	Total I:	\$ 4,478,018.05
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J	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers					
Demolish Existing Turnout	40 EA	\$	52,421.76	/EA	\$ 2,096,870.40
Install No. 10 Turnout	40 EA	\$	163,767.56	/EA	\$ 6,550,702.40

Total J:	\$ 8,647,572.80
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K	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super				
Single Track	10 EA	\$	346,392.00 /EA	\$ 3,463,920.00
Double Track	6 EA	\$	416,588.00 /EA	\$ 2,499,528.00
Triple Track	1 EA	\$	499,905.60 /EA	\$ 499,905.60
Speed Update (Single Track)	10 EA	\$	25,000.00 /EA	\$ 250,000.00
Speed Update (Double Track and Triple Track)	7 EA	\$	50,000.00 /EA	\$ 350,000.00

Replace Rail					
Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	1,600.00
Install New Ties	32 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	4,800.00
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	3,200.00
Demo Existing Rail	750 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	34,792.50
Install new Rail	750 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	56,250.00
Mechanical Joints	50 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	17,500.00
Remove Existing Ballast	750 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	43,792.50
Install New Ballast	639 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	31,960.23
Surface & Align	750 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	34,522.50

Total K:	\$	7,291,771.33
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L	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview						
Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	390.18	ACRE	\$	36,000.00	/A	\$ 14,046,458.43

Total L:	\$ 14,046,458.43
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M	Timber Bridge Deck Ties	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Timber Bridge Deck Ties						
Required to increase track class	1500 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	225,000.00	

\$ 258,714,180.88
\$ 40,769,490.65
\$ 4,478,018.05
\$ 8,647,572.80
\$ 7,291,771.33
\$ 14,046,458.43

[illegible]

Alternative 4

Total M:	\$ 225,000.00
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N	Culvert Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Culvert Replacement			
	Remove & Replace Existing Culvert	6 EA	\$ 830,000.00 /LS	\$ 4,980,000.00

Total N:	\$ 4,980,000.00
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O	Layover Facility - North Adams, MA
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Construct new track					
Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3666.667	TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 183,333.33
Install new Rail	5500	TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 412,500.00
Install New Ties	3385	EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 507,750.00
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	6770	EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 338,500.00
Flashbutt Welds	142	EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 71,000.00
Surface & Align	5500	LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 253,165.00
Install No. 20 Turnout	1	EA	\$	208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
Install No. 10 Turnout	2	EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$ 327,535.12
Install No. 8 Turnout	3	EA	\$	102,078.23 /EA	\$ 306,234.69
Bumping Posts	4	EA	\$	3,500.00 /EA	\$ 14,000.00
Switch Derail	4	EA	\$	3,200.00 /EA	\$ 12,800.00
Replace Northern Track					
Demo Existing Ties	1650	EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 82,500.00
Install New Ties	1650	EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 247,500.00
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	3300	EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 165,000.00
Demo Existing Rail	2680	TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 124,325.20
Install new Rail	2680	TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 201,000.00
Joint Demo	69	EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$ 28,628.79
Thermite Weld	69	EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 34,500.00
Remove Existing Ballast	2680	TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 156,485.20
Install New Ballast	1786.667	TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 89,333.33
Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks					
Clear & Grub	7.5	A	\$	40,000.00 /A	\$ 300,000.00
Grading	36550	SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$ 73,100.00
Excavation for track subgrade	24368	CY	\$	45.00 /CY	\$ 1,096,554.83
Access Road					
Rubber Rail Seal	4000	TF	\$	389.30 /TF	\$ 1,557,200.00
Subbase	2104.61	CY	\$	32.00 /CY	\$ 67,347.53
Grading	9423.63	SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$ 18,847.26
Paving	9423.63	SY	\$	150.00 /SY	\$ 1,413,544.17

Total O:	\$ 8,291,212.04
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P	Bridge Rehabilitations	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Bridge Rehabilitations				
# of Bridges	97 ea	\$ 2,300,000.00 /EA	\$ 223,100,000.00	

	Total P:	\$ 223,100,000.00
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Q	Signal Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Signal Replacement					
Single Track Wayside Signal	12 ea	\$	282,782.00	/EA	\$ 3,393,384.00
Double Track Wayside Signal	8 ea	\$	378,921.00	/EA	\$ 3,031,368.00
Tie-In Case Wayside Signal	15 ea	\$	54,895.00	/EA	\$ 823,425.00
End of Siding Wayside Signal	9 ea	\$	1,142,825.00	/EA	\$ 10,285,425.00
Modifying Existing Interlocking	1 ea	\$	410,588.00	/EA	\$ 410,588.00
Convert Electric Lock	13 ea	\$	129,490.00	/EA	\$ 1,683,370.00
Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail	1 ea	\$	185,248.00	/EA	\$ 185,248.00
Insulated Joints	104 ea	\$	3,159.72	/EA	\$ 328,610.88

	Total Q:	\$ 20,141,418.88
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R	PTC	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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PTC Implementation	1 LS	\$ 45,963,527.00 /EA	\$ 45,963,527.00
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	Total R:	\$ 45,963,527.00
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S	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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\$	225,000.00
\$	4,980,000.00

\$ 8,291,212.04
\$ 223,100,000.00
\$ 20,141,418.88
\$ 45,963,527.00

[illegible]

Alternative 4

North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum				
Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 12,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00	
Shelburne Falls Lump Sum				
Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 6,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 6,000,000.00	
Athol Lump Sum				
Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 6,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 6,000,000.00	
Gardner Lump Sum				
Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 6,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 6,000,000.00	

Total S:	\$ 30,000,000.00
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T	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Demo Rail	1362333 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (7,969,647.52)

	Total T:	\$ (7,969,647.52)
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Running Total:	\$	782,683,049.34
50% Contingency:	\$	391,341,524.67
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$	117,402,457.40
Vehicle Allowance:	\$	65,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$	234,038,044.63
Total Cost:	\$	1,590,465,076

1655784036

\$	30,000,000.00
\$	(7,969,647.52)
\$	65,000,000.00

\$ 57,783,000.00	Stations
\$ 73,752,703.51	Layover + Stations
\$ 878,041,128.91	Track total
\$ 870,071,481.39	Track Net of salvage
\$ 82,946,500.00	
\$ 122,505,600.00	

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total
Track Work	\$ 447,895,120.10	\$ 223,947,560.05	\$ 67,184,268.02		\$123,660,014.42	\$ 862,686,962.59
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 73,396,717.21	\$ 36,698,358.61	\$ 11,009,507.58		\$20,264,206.29	\$ 141,368,789.68
Stations	\$ 30,000,000.00	\$ 15,000,000.00	\$ 4,500,000.00		\$8,282,743.58	\$ 57,782,743.58
Layover	\$ 8,291,212.04	\$ 4,145,606.02	\$ 1,243,681.81		\$2,289,132.78	\$ 15,969,632.64
Rolling Stock				\$65,000,000.00	\$17,945,944.43	\$ 82,945,944.43
Total	\$ 782,683,049.35	\$ 391,341,524.68	\$ 117,402,457.40	\$65,000,000.00	\$234,038,044.63	\$ 1,590,465,076.06
	\$ (0.01)					

Alternative 5

A	Track Construction - Charlemont/Zoar, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost	
Construct new track adjacent to main line					
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	9300 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 465,000.00	
	Install new Rail	32736 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 2,455,200.00	
	Install New Ties	20147 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 3,022,084.62	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	40294.46154 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 2,014,723.08	
	Flashbutt Welds	840 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 420,000.00	
	Surface & Align	32736 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 1,506,838.08	
Realign main line to accomodate second track					
	Surface and realign	32736 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 1,405,356.48	
Relocated existing fiber optic (?) utility adjacent to exisitng main track					
	Relocate	32736 LF	\$ 4.20 /LF	\$ 137,491.20	
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track					
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1613.3 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,657,861.33	
	Excavation	6453.3 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 161,333.33	
	Backfill	3872.0 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 123,904.00	
Chickley River UGB					
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00	
Deerfield River UGB					
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00	
Pelham Brook UGB					
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00	
Hoosac Tunnel Rd UGB					
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00	
UGB (per track chart)					
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 1,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,200,000.00	
Rebuild Towers Rd grade crossing for 2 tracks					
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00	
Rebuild farm crossing					
	Double Track	1 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 416,588.00	
Construct new Interlocking at CPF 407					
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60	
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00	
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00	
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00	
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00	
Construct new Interlocking at CPF 409					
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60	
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00	
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00	
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00	
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00	
Remove CPF 414					
	Demolish Existing Turnout	1 EA	\$ 52,421.76 /EA	\$ 52,421.76	
Total A:				\$ 22,271,321.32	\$ 22,271,321.32

B	Track Construction - Stillwater/Mechanicville, NY	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	1875 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 93,750.00
	Install new Rail	6600 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 495,000.00
	Install New Ties	4064 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 609,530.77
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8127.076923 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 406,353.85
	Flashbutt Welds	170 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 85,000.00
	Surface & Align	6600 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 303,798.00
Realign main line to accomodate second track				
	Surface and realign	6600 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 283,338.00
Relocated existing fiber optic (?) utility adjacent to exisitng main track				
	Relocate	6600 LF	\$ 4.20 /LF	\$ 27,720.00
Anthony's Kill UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 3,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 3,200,000.00
Rebuild Vial Ave grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Modify Interlocking at CPF 466				
	Modify Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 422,039.00 /EA	\$ 422,039.00
Modify Interlocking at CPF 467				

Alternative 5

Modify Interlocking	1 ea	\$	422,039.00 /EA	\$	422,039.00
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Total B:				\$	8,148,568.62
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\$ 8,148,568.62

C	Track Construction - Clifton Park/Mechanicville, NY	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	5925 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 296,250.00
	Install new Rail	20856 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,564,200.00
	Install New Ties	12836 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,925,469.23
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	25672.92308 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,283,646.15
	Flashbutt Welds	535 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 267,500.00
	Surface & Align	20856 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 960,001.68
Realign main line to accomodate second track				
	Surface and realign	20856 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 895,348.08
Relocated existing fiber optic (?) utility adjacent to exisitng main track				
	Relocate	20856 LF	\$ 4.20 /LF	\$ 87,595.20
NY Route 9 UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 3,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 3,200,000.00
Dwaas Kill UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 3,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 3,200,000.00
Farm road UGB				
	Construct New 30' Span	1 LS	\$ 3,200,000.00 /LS	\$ 3,200,000.00
Rebuild Pierce Rd grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild Tabor Rd grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild farm grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild Usher's Road grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Rebuild Cary Road grade crossing for 2 tracks				
	Rebuild Grade Crossing	1 LS	\$ 1,800,000.00 /LS	\$ 1,800,000.00
Construct new Interlocking at CPF 473				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00
	Electrical, Signal & Communication	1 LS	\$ 196,874.00 /LS	\$ 196,874.00
Modify Interlocking at CPF 469				
	Modify Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 422,039.00 /EA	\$ 422,039.00

Total C:				\$	26,742,956.94
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\$ 26,742,956.94

D	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track adjacent to main line				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track				
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track				
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337				
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00

Total D:			
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E	Track Construction - Charlemont/Rowe, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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Only Applies to High Bookend, not needed here

Alternative 5

Construct new track adjacent to main line					
Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3300 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	165,000.00
Install new Rail	11616 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	871,200.00
Install New Ties	7150 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	1,072,546.15
Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	14300.61538 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	715,030.77
Flashbutt Welds	298 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	149,000.00
Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	947,849.76
Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track					
CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1613.3 CY	\$	1,027.60 /CY	\$	1,657,861.33
Excavation	6453.3 CY	\$	25.00 /CY	\$	161,333.33
Backfill	3872.0 CY	\$	32.00 /CY	\$	123,904.00
Modify Existing CPF 415 to accommodate second track					
#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$	163,767.56
Track Throw	200 LF	\$	42.93 /LF	\$	8,586.00
Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 411					
Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$	87,430.00 /EA	\$	87,430.00
Access Road	200 SY	\$	125.00 /SY	\$	25,000.00
Grading	200 SY	\$	6.50 /SY	\$	1,300.00
Surface & Align	200 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	9,206.00

Total E:				
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Only Applies to High Bookend, not needed here

F	Rehabilitation of track from class 1 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	4150 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 207,500.00
	Install New Ties	4150 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 622,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8300 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 415,000.00
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	13693.58 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 635,245.18
	Install new Rail	13693.58 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 1,027,018.50
	Mechanical Joints	352 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$ 123,200.00
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	13693.58 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 799,568.14
	Install New Ballast	11670.66 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 583,533.24
Surfacing	Surface & Align	41080.74 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 1,890,946.46

Total F:				\$ 6,304,511.51
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\$

6,304,511.51

G	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	39355 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 1,967,750.00
	Install New Ties	39355 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 5,903,250.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	78710 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 3,935,500.00
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	207791.33 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 9,639,439.80
	Install new Rail	207791.33 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 15,584,349.75
	Mechanical Joints	5328 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$ 1,864,800.00
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	207791.33 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 12,132,935.76
	Install New Ballast	98386.05 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 4,919,302.32
Surfacing	Surface & Align	415,582.66 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 19,129,269.84

Total G:				\$ 75,076,597.47
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\$

75,076,597.47

H	Rehabilitation of 10.86 miles of track from class 1 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	17376 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 868,800.00
	Install New Ties	17376 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 2,606,400.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	34752 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 1,737,600.00
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	114682 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 5,320,097.98
	Install new Rail	114682 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 8,601,150.00
	Mechanical Joints	2867 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$ 1,003,467.50
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	114682 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 6,696,281.98
	Install New Ballast	48870.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 2,443,500.00

Alternative 5

Surfacing	Surface & Align	172022 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	7,918,172.66	
Total H:					\$	37,195,470.12	\$ 37,195,470.12
I	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	112411 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	5,620,550.00	
	Install New Ties	112411 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	16,861,650.00	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	224822 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	11,241,100.00	
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	913123 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	42,359,775.97	
	Install new Rail	913123 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	68,484,225.00	
	Mechanical Joints	22828 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	7,989,826.25	
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	913123 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	53,317,251.97	
	Install New Ballast	216175.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	10,808,750.00	
Surfacing	Surface & Align	913123 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	42,031,051.69	
Total I:					\$	258,714,180.88	\$ 258,714,180.88
J	Rehabilitation of track from class 3 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	22836 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	1,141,800.00	
	Install New Ties	22836 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	3,425,400.00	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	45672 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	2,283,600.00	
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	109613 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	5,084,947.07	
	Install new Rail	109613 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	8,220,975.00	
Joint Elimination	Joint Demo	2803 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	1,162,992.73	
	Thermite Weld	2803 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	1,401,500.00	
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	109613 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	6,400,303.07	
	Install New Ballast	31140.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	1,557,000.00	
Surfacing	Surface & Align	219226 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	10,090,972.78	
Total J:					\$	40,769,490.65	\$ 40,769,490.65
K	Rehabilitation of 6.91 miles of track from class 1 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	44907 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	2,245,330.77	
	Install New Ties	44907 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	6,735,992.31	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	89813.23077 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	4,490,661.54	
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	72970 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	3,385,078.30	
	Install new Rail	72970 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	5,472,750.00	
	Mechanical Joints	1824 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	638,487.50	
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	72970 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	4,260,718.30	
	Install New Ballast	62190.34 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	3,109,517.05	
Surfacing	Surface & Align	72970 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	3,358,809.10	
Total K:					\$	33,697,344.86	\$ 33,697,344.86
L	Rehabilitation of 12 miles of track from class 2 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	77984 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	3,899,176.92	
	Install New Ties	77984 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	11,697,530.77	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	155967.0769 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	7,798,353.85	
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	126720 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	5,878,540.80	
	Install new Rail	126720 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	9,504,000.00	
	Mechanical Joints	3168 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	1,108,800.00	

Alternative 5

Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	126720 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	7,399,180.80	
	Install New Ballast	108000.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	5,400,000.00	
Surfacing	Surface & Align	126720 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	5,832,921.60	
Total L:					\$	58,518,504.74	\$ 58,518,504.74

M	Rehabilitation of 28.60 miles of track from class 3 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	92930 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	4,646,500.00	
	Install New Ties	92930 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	13,939,500.00	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	185860 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	9,293,000.00	
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	151008 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	7,005,261.12	
	Install new Rail	151008 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	11,325,600.00	
Joint Elimination	Joint Demo	2803 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	1,162,992.73	
	Thermite Weld	2803 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	1,401,500.00	
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	151008 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	8,817,357.12	
	Install New Ballast	128700.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	6,435,000.00	
Surfacing	Surface & Align	302016 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	13,901,796.48	
Total M:					\$	77,928,507.45	\$ 77,928,507.45

N	State of Good Repair to Remove Slow Orders	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast							
	Install New Ballast	8353.31 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	417,665.72	
	Surface & Align	88,211.00 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	4,060,352.33	
Total N:					\$	4,478,018.05	\$ 4,478,018.05

O	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers							
	Demolish Existing Turnout	40 EA	\$	52,421.76 /EA	\$	2,096,870.40	
	Install No. 10 Turnout	40 EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$	6,550,702.40	
Total O:					\$	8,647,572.80	\$ 8,647,572.80

P	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super							
	Single Track	10 EA	\$	346,392.00 /EA	\$	3,463,920.00	
	Double Track	6 EA	\$	416,588.00 /EA	\$	2,499,528.00	
	Triple Track	1 EA	\$	499,905.60 /EA	\$	499,905.60	
	Speed Update (Single Track)	10 EA	\$	25,000.00 /EA	\$	250,000.00	
	Speed Update (Double Track and Triple Track)	7 EA	\$	50,000.00 /EA	\$	350,000.00	
Replace Rail							
	Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	1,600.00	
	Install New Ties	32 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$	4,800.00	
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	3,200.00	
	Demo Existing Rail	750 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	34,792.50	
	Install new Rail	750 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	56,250.00	
	Mechanical Joints	50 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	17,500.00	
	Remove Existing Ballast	750 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	43,792.50	
	Install New Ballast	639 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	31,960.23	
	Surface & Align	750 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	34,522.50	
Total P:					\$	7,291,771.33	\$ 7,291,771.33

Q	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price		Total Cost		
	increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview						
	Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	390.18 ACRE	\$	36,000.00 /A	\$	14,046,458.43	
Total Q:					\$	14,046,458.43	\$ 14,046,458.43
							\$ 7,291,771.33 Crossings Subtotal

Alternative 5

R	Timber Bridge Deck Ties	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Timber Bridge Deck Ties				
	Required to increase track class	1500 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 225,000.00
Total R:				\$ 225,000.00

\$ 225,000.00

S	Culvert Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Culvert Replacement				
	Remove & Replace Existing Culvert	6 EA	\$ 830,000.00 /LS	\$ 4,980,000.00
Total S:				\$ 4,980,000.00

\$ 4,980,000.00

\$ 667,723,273.02 Track Subtotal

T	Layover Facility - North Adams, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Construct new track				
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3666.667 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 183,333.33
	Install new Rail	5500 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 412,500.00
	Install New Ties	3385 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 507,750.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	6770 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 338,500.00
	Flashbutt Welds	142 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 71,000.00
	Surface & Align	5500 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 253,165.00
	Install No. 20 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Install No. 10 Turnout	2 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 327,535.12
	Install No. 8 Turnout	3 EA	\$ 102,078.23 /EA	\$ 306,234.69
	Bumping Posts	4 EA	\$ 3,500.00 /EA	\$ 14,000.00
	Switch Derail	4 EA	\$ 3,200.00 /EA	\$ 12,800.00
Replace Northern Track				
	Demo Existing Ties	1650 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 82,500.00
	Install New Ties	1650 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 247,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	3300 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 165,000.00
	Demo Existing Rail	2680 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 124,325.20
	Install new Rail	2680 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 201,000.00
	Joint Demo	69 EA	\$ 414.91 /EA	\$ 28,628.79
	Thermite Weld	69 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 34,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	2680 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 156,485.20
	Install New Ballast	1786.667 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 89,333.33
Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks				
	Clear & Grub	7.5 A	\$ 40,000.00 /A	\$ 300,000.00
	Grading	36550 SY	\$ 2.00 /SY	\$ 73,100.00
	Excavation for track subgrade	24368 CY	\$ 45.00 /CY	\$ 1,096,554.83
Access Road				
	Rubber Rail Seal	4000 TF	\$ 389.30 /TF	\$ 1,557,200.00
	Subbase	2104.61 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 67,347.53
	Grading	9423.63 SY	\$ 2.00 /SY	\$ 18,847.26
	Paving	9423.63 SY	\$ 150.00 /SY	\$ 1,413,544.17
Total T:				

\$ - Layover Subtotal Using the Albany/Rensselaer facility

U	Bridge Rehabilitations	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Bridge Rehabilitations				
	# of Bridges	97 ea	\$ 2,300,000.00 /EA	\$ 223,100,000.00
Total U:				\$ 223,100,000.00

\$ 223,100,000.00

\$ 429,712,910.00 Bridge Total

V	Signal Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Signal Replacement				
	Single Track Wayside Signal	12 ea	\$ 282,782.00 /EA	\$ 3,393,384.00
	Double Track Wayside Signal	8 ea	\$ 378,921.00 /EA	\$ 3,031,368.00
	Tie-In Case Wayside Signal	15 ea	\$ 54,895.00 /EA	\$ 823,425.00
	End of Siding Wayside Signal	9 ea	\$ 1,142,825.00 /EA	\$ 10,285,425.00
	Modifying Existing Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 410,588.00 /EA	\$ 410,588.00
	Convert Electric Lock	13 ea	\$ 129,490.00 /EA	\$ 1,683,370.00
	Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail	1 ea	\$ 185,248.00 /EA	\$ 185,248.00
	Insulated Joints	104 ea	\$ 3,159.72 /EA	\$ 328,610.88
Total V:				\$ 20,141,418.88

\$ 20,141,418.88

\$ 38,794,386.90 Signals Subtotal

W	PTC	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
PTC Implementation				
	PTC Implementation	1 LS	\$ 45,963,527.00 /EA	\$ 45,963,527.00

Alternative 5

	Total W:		\$	45,963,527.00
X	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum			
	Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 12,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00
	Total X:		\$	12,000,000.00
Y	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Demo Rail	1713031 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (10,021,230.82)
	Total Y:		\$	(10,021,230.82)

Running Total:	\$	976,219,990.22
50% Contingency:	\$	488,109,995.11
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$	146,432,998.53
Vehicle Allowance:	\$	65,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$	287,471,939.81
Total Cost:	\$	1,963,234,924
	\$	2,044,523,516.00

\$	45,963,527.00

\$	12,000,000.00
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\$	(10,021,230.82)
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\$	65,000,000.00
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\$	88,530,349.35	Signals PTC Subtotal
\$	127,324,736.26	Signals total

\$	23,113,200.00	Stations
\$	150,437,936.26	Layover + Stations

\$	-	Track total
\$	(10,021,230.82)	Track Net of salvage

\$	82,946,500.00
\$	122,505,600.00

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total
Track Work	\$ 667,723,273.02	\$ 333,861,636.51	\$ 100,158,490.95		\$184,352,688.53	\$ 1,286,096,089.02
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 73,396,717.21	\$ 36,698,358.61	\$ 11,009,507.58		\$20,264,206.29	\$ 141,368,789.68
Stations	\$ 12,000,000.00	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00		\$3,313,097.43	\$ 23,113,097.43
Layover	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$0.00	\$ -
Rolling Stock				\$65,000,000.00	\$17,945,944.43	\$ 82,945,944.43
Total	\$ 976,219,990.23	\$ 488,109,995.12	\$ 146,432,998.53	\$65,000,000.00	\$287,471,939.82	\$ 1,963,234,923.70
	\$ (0.01)					

Alternative 6

A	Track Rehabilitation - Fitchburg, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	500 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 25,000.00
	Install New Ties	500 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 75,000.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	1000 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 50,000.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	1000 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 46,390.00
	Install new Rail	1000 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 75,000.00
	Mechanical Joints	32 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 11,200.00
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	1000 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 58,390.00
	Install New Ballast	852.27 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 42,613.64
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	1000 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 46,030.00

Total A:	\$ 429,623.64
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B	Track Construction - Westminster, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3900 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 195,000.00
	Install new Rail	13728 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 1,029,600.00
	Install New Ties	8450 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,267,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	16900 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 845,000.00
	Flashbutt Welds	352 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 176,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
	Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track			
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1910 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,962,716.00
	Excavation	9152 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 228,800.00
	Backfill	4576.00 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 146,432.00
	Modify CPF 335 to accommodate second track			
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
	Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 337			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00

Total B:	
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C	Track Construction - Charlemont/Rowe, MA	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Construct new track adjacent to main line			
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3300 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 165,000.00
	Install new Rail	11616 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 871,200.00
	Install New Ties	7150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 1,072,546.15
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	14300.61538 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 715,030.77
	Flashbutt Welds	298 EA	\$ 500.00 /EA	\$ 149,000.00
	Surface & Align	20592 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 947,849.76
	Construct retaining wall/slope stabilization for new track			
	CIP Retaining Wall (15" thick)	1613.3 CY	\$ 1,027.60 /CY	\$ 1,657,861.33
	Excavation	6453.3 CY	\$ 25.00 /CY	\$ 161,333.33
	Backfill	3872.0 CY	\$ 32.00 /CY	\$ 123,904.00
	Modify Existing CPF 415 to accommodate second track			
	#10 Turnout	1 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 163,767.56
	Track Throw	200 LF	\$ 42.93 /LF	\$ 8,586.00
	Construction new hi-speed Interlocking at CPF 411			
	Equilateral No. 20	1 EA	\$ 87,430.00 /EA	\$ 87,430.00
	Access Road	200 SY	\$ 125.00 /SY	\$ 25,000.00
	Grading	200 SY	\$ 6.50 /SY	\$ 1,300.00
	Surface & Align	200 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 9,206.00

Total C:

D	Rehabilitation of track from class 1 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	4150 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 207,500.00
	Install New Ties	4150 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 622,500.00

[illegible]

Alternative 6

Rail	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	8300 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	415,000.00
	Demo Existing Rail	13693.58 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	635,245.18
	Install new Rail	13693.58 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	1,027,018.50
	Mechanical Joints	352 EA	\$	350.00 /EA	\$	123,200.00
Ballast						
	Remove Existing Ballast	13693.58 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	799,568.14
Surfacing	Install New Ballast	11670.66 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	583,533.24
	Surface & Align	41080.74 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	1,890,946.46
Total D:					\$	6,304,511.51

E	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 3	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties	Demo Existing Ties	39355 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,967,750.00
	Install New Ties	39355 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 5,903,250.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	78710 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,935,500.00
Rail	Demo Existing Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 9,639,439.80
	Install new Rail	207791.33 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 15,584,349.75
	Mechanical Joints	5328 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,864,800.00
Ballast	Remove Existing Ballast	207791.33 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 12,132,935.76
	Install New Ballast	98386.05 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 4,919,302.32
Surfacing	Surface & Align	415,582.66 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 19,129,269.84
Total E:				\$ 75,076,597.47

F	Rehabilitation of 10.86 miles of track from class 1 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	17376 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 868,800.00
	Install New Ties	17376 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 2,606,400.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	34752 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,737,600.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	114682 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 5,320,097.98
	Install new Rail	114682 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 8,601,150.00
	Mechanical Joints	2867 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 1,003,467.50
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	114682 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 6,696,281.98
	Install New Ballast	48870.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 2,443,500.00
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	172022 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 7,918,172.66
Total F:				\$ 37,195,470.12

G	Rehabilitation of track from class 2 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	112411 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 5,620,550.00
	Install New Ties	112411 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 16,861,650.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	224822 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 11,241,100.00
Rail				
	Demo Existing Rail	913123 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 42,359,775.97
	Install new Rail	913123 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 68,484,225.00
	Mechanical Joints	22828 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 7,989,826.25
Ballast				
	Remove Existing Ballast	913123 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 53,317,251.97
	Install New Ballast	216175.00 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 10,808,750.00
Surfacing				
	Surface & Align	913123 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 42,031,051.69
Total G:				\$ 258,714,180.88

H	Rehabilitation of track from class 3 to 4	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Ties				
	Demo Existing Ties	22836 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,141,800.00
	Install New Ties	22836 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 3,425,400.00

[illegible]

Alternative 6

Rail	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	45672 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$	2,283,600.00
	Demo Existing Rail	109613 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$	5,084,947.07
	Install new Rail	109613 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$	8,220,975.00
Joint Elimination						
	Joint Demo	2803 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$	1,162,992.73
	Thermite Weld	2803 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$	1,401,500.00
Ballast						
	Remove Existing Ballast	109613 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$	6,400,303.07
	Install New Ballast	31140.00 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$	1,557,000.00
Surfacing						
	Surface & Align	219226 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$	10,090,972.78

Total H:	\$ 40,769,490.65
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I	State of Good Repair to Remove Slow Orders	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
No Change in Type, Just Align & Ballast				
Install New Ballast	8353.31 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 417,665.72	
Surface & Align	88,211.00 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 4,060,352.33	

	Total I:	\$	4,478,018.05
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J	Turnout Replacement Package	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	All turnouts located on main tracks to be replaced, including sibling turnouts at crossovers			
	Demolish Existing Turnout	40 EA	\$ 52,421.76 /EA	\$ 2,096,870.40
	Install No. 10 Turnout	40 EA	\$ 163,767.56 /EA	\$ 6,550,702.40

Total J:	\$	8,647,572.80
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K	Crossing Renewal	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Every crossing to be rebuilt to meet track class and super			
	Single Track	10 EA	\$ 346,392.00 /EA	\$ 3,463,920.00
	Double Track	6 EA	\$ 416,588.00 /EA	\$ 2,499,528.00
	Triple Track	1 EA	\$ 499,905.60 /EA	\$ 499,905.60
	Speed Update (Single Track)	10 EA	\$ 25,000.00 /EA	\$ 250,000.00
	Speed Update (Double Track and Triple Track)	7 EA	\$ 50,000.00 /EA	\$ 350,000.00
	Replace Rail			
	Demo Existing Ties	32 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 1,600.00
	Install New Ties	32 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 4,800.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	64 EA	\$ 50.00 /EA	\$ 3,200.00
	Demo Existing Rail	750 TF	\$ 46.39 /TF	\$ 34,792.50
	Install new Rail	750 TF	\$ 75.00 /TF	\$ 56,250.00
	Mechanical Joints	50 EA	\$ 350.00 /EA	\$ 17,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	750 TF	\$ 58.39 /TF	\$ 43,792.50
	Install New Ballast	639 TN	\$ 50.00 /TN	\$ 31,960.23
	Surface & Align	750 LF	\$ 46.03 /LF	\$ 34,522.50

Total K:	\$ 7,291,771.33
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L	Canopy/Brush Cutting	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	increase visibility on ROW for higher speeds/signal preview			
	Clearing Both Sides of ROW (15' each)	390.18 ACRE	\$ 36,000.00 /A	\$ 14,046,458.43

Total L:	\$ 14,046,458.43
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M	Timber Bridge Deck Ties	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Timber Bridge Deck Ties			
	Required to increase track class	1500 EA	\$ 150.00 /EA	\$ 225,000.00

Total M:	\$	225,000.00
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N	Culvert Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Culvert Replacement			
	Remove & Replace Existing Culvert	6 EA	\$ 830,000.00 /LS	\$ 4,980,000.00

Total N:	\$ 4,980,000.00
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\$ 40,769,490.65		
\$ 4,478,018.05		
\$ 8,647,572.80		
\$ 7,291,771.33		\$ 7,291,771.33
\$ 14,046,458.43		
\$ 225,000.00		
\$ 4,980,000.00		
\$ 450,866,923.55		\$ 868,414,781.44

3	Crossings Subtotal	
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4 Track subtotal

Alternative 6

O	Layover Facility - North Adams, MA				
Construct new track					
	Install New Ballast (12" thick)	3666.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 183,333.33
	Install new Rail	5500 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 412,500.00
	Install New Ties	3385 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 507,750.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	6770 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 338,500.00
	Flashbutt Welds	142 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 71,000.00
	Surface & Align	5500 LF	\$	46.03 /LF	\$ 253,165.00
	Install No. 20 Turnout	1 EA	\$	208,527.60 /EA	\$ 208,527.60
	Install No. 10 Turnout	2 EA	\$	163,767.56 /EA	\$ 327,535.12
	Install No. 8 Turnout	3 EA	\$	102,078.23 /EA	\$ 306,234.69
	Bumping Posts	4 EA	\$	3,500.00 /EA	\$ 14,000.00
	Switch Derail	4 EA	\$	3,200.00 /EA	\$ 12,800.00
Replace Northern Track					
	Demo Existing Ties	1650 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 82,500.00
	Install New Ties	1650 EA	\$	150.00 /EA	\$ 247,500.00
	Resilient Fastener Tie Plate Assembly	3300 EA	\$	50.00 /EA	\$ 165,000.00
	Demo Existing Rail	2680 TF	\$	46.39 /TF	\$ 124,325.20
	Install new Rail	2680 TF	\$	75.00 /TF	\$ 201,000.00
	Joint Demo	69 EA	\$	414.91 /EA	\$ 28,628.79
	Thermite Weld	69 EA	\$	500.00 /EA	\$ 34,500.00
	Remove Existing Ballast	2680 TF	\$	58.39 /TF	\$ 156,485.20
	Install New Ballast	1786.667 TN	\$	50.00 /TN	\$ 89,333.33
Clearing, Grubbing, & Grading for New Tracks					
	Clear & Grub	7.5 A	\$	40,000.00 /A	\$ 300,000.00
	Grading	36550 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$ 73,100.00
	Excavation for track subgrade	24368 CY	\$	45.00 /CY	\$ 1,096,554.83
Access Road					
	Rubber Rail Seal	4000 TF	\$	389.30 /TF	\$ 1,557,200.00
	Subbase	2104.61 CY	\$	32.00 /CY	\$ 67,347.53
	Grading	9423.63 SY	\$	2.00 /SY	\$ 18,847.26
	Paving	9423.63 SY	\$	150.00 /SY	\$ 1,413,544.17
	Total O:				\$ 8,291,212.04

P	Bridge Rehabilitations	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
Bridge Rehabilitations				
# of Bridges		97 ea	\$ 2,300,000.00 /EA	\$ 223,100,000.00
Total P:				\$ 223,100,000.00

Q	Signal Replacement	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Signal Replacement			
	Single Track Wayside Signal	12 ea	\$ 282,782.00 /EA	\$ 3,393,384.00
	Double Track Wayside Signal	8 ea	\$ 378,921.00 /EA	\$ 3,031,368.00
	Tie-In Case Wayside Signal	15 ea	\$ 54,895.00 /EA	\$ 823,425.00
	End of Siding Wayside Signal	9 ea	\$ 1,142,825.00 /EA	\$ 10,285,425.00
	Modifying Existing Interlocking	1 ea	\$ 410,588.00 /EA	\$ 410,588.00
	Convert Electric Lock	13 ea	\$ 129,490.00 /EA	\$ 1,683,370.00
	Modify Interlocking - PTC Derail	1 ea	\$ 185,248.00 /EA	\$ 185,248.00
	Insulated Joints	104 ea	\$ 3,159.72 /EA	\$ 328,610.88

	Total Q:	\$ 20,141,418.88
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R	PTC	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
	PTC Implementation			
	PTC Implementation	1 LS	\$ 45,963,527.00 /EA	\$ 45,963,527.00

	Total R:	\$ 45,963,527.00
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S	Station Modification	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
North Adams & Greenfield Lump Sum				
	Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 12,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 12,000,000.00
Athol Lump Sum				
	Station Modification	1 LS	\$ 6,000,000.00 /EA	\$ 6,000,000.00

	Total S:	\$ 18,000,000.00
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T	Salvage Cost for Demo Rail	Takeoff Qty	Unit Price	Total Cost
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\$	8,291,212.04	\$	15,969,703.51	Layover Subtotal \$ 15,969,703.51
\$	223,100,000.00	\$	429,712,910.00	Bridge \$429,712,910.00
\$	20,141,418.88	\$	38,794,386.90	Signals Subtotal \$ 38,794,386.90
\$	45,963,527.00	\$	88,530,349.35	Signals PTC Subtotal \$ 88,530,349.35
		\$	127,324,736.26	Signals total \$127,324,736.26
\$	18,000,000.00	\$	34,669,800.00	Stations \$ 34,669,800.00
		\$	50,639,503.51	Layover + Stations Total

Alternative 6

Demo Rail	1363333 TF	\$5.85 /LS	\$ (7,975,497.52)
Total T:			\$ (7,975,497.52)

Running Total:	\$ 765,679,355.27
50% Contingency:	\$ 382,839,677.64
15% Design & Permitting Fees:	\$ 114,851,903.29
Vehicle Allowance:	\$ 65,000,000.00
27.61% Escalation:	\$ 229,343,470.03
Total Cost:	\$ 1,557,714,406

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0.9261

2.034421

		\$ 868,414,781.44
\$ (7,975,497.52)		\$ 860,439,283.92
		\$ 442,891,426.02
\$ 758,387,583.94		

Track total
Track Net of salvage Total

\$ 65,000,000.00	\$ 82,946,500.00
	\$ 122,505,600.00

	Total	50% Contingency	15% D&P	Vehicles	Escalation	Total
Track Work	\$ 442,891,426.02	\$ 221,445,713.01	\$ 66,433,713.90		\$122,278,537.26	\$ 853,049,390.19
Bridges	\$ 223,100,000.00	\$ 111,550,000.00	\$ 33,465,000.00		\$61,596,003.13	\$ 429,711,003.13
Signals & Grade Xings	\$ 73,396,717.21	\$ 36,698,358.60	\$ 11,009,507.58		\$20,264,206.29	\$ 141,368,789.68
Stations	\$ 18,000,000.00	\$ 9,000,000.00	\$ 2,700,000.00		\$4,969,646.15	\$ 34,669,646.15
Layover	\$ 8,291,212.04	\$ 4,145,606.02	\$ 1,243,681.81		\$2,289,132.78	\$ 15,969,632.64
Rolling Stock				\$65,000,000.00	\$17,945,944.43	\$ 82,945,944.43
Total	\$ 765,679,355.27	\$ 382,839,677.64	\$ 114,851,903.29	\$65,000,000.00	\$229,343,470.03	\$ 1,557,714,406.23

Appendix F

Benefit-Cost Analysis

NORTHERN TIER PASSENGER RAIL STUDY: BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is exploring the development of passenger rail service along the Route 2 corridor between North Adams and Boston (“The Project”). The US Department of Transportation (USDOT)¹ defines a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) as a tool for identifying, quantifying, and comparing expected benefits and costs of an investment, action, or policy. This approach for analyzing a proposed project is a required element for many discretionary USDOT grant programs.

Table 1 summarizes the estimated costs and benefits of the proposed six Northern Tier Passenger Rail (NTPR) alternatives. The benefit-cost ratios (BCRs) for these project alternatives range from -0.10 to -0.44 and have a Net Present Values (NPVs) ranging from -\$781 million to - \$1.87 billion. Alternative 1, the lowest-cost alternative, has the highest Net Present Value.

Table 1: Modified BCA Summary, millions of 2021 dollars (discounted at 7 percent unless otherwise stated)

BCA Metric	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
O&M Net Savings	- \$265.7	- \$238.5	- \$206.5	- \$223.5	- \$387.4	- \$182.5
Safety Benefits	\$2.3	\$3.8	\$6.1	\$6.2	\$3.8	\$0.1
Avoided Road Wear and Tear	~\$0.0	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	~\$0.0
Avoided Congestion	\$2.0	\$3.3	\$5.4	\$5.4	\$3.3	\$0.1
Avoided Emissions (except CO ₂)	- \$0.2	- \$0.1	\$0.1	- \$0.1	- \$0.2	- \$0.1
Avoided Emissions (CO ₂ only)*	\$0.8	\$1.3	\$2.4	\$2.2	\$1.3	~\$0.0
Property Value Increase	\$21.9	\$20.5	\$27.9	\$42.6	\$20.5	\$31.9
Total Benefits	- \$238.8	- \$209.5	- \$164.5	- \$167.0	- \$358.7	- \$150.6
Total Costs	\$542.1	\$941.7	\$1,701.3	\$953.4	\$1,177.8	\$964.5
NPV	- \$780.9	- \$1,151.2	- \$1,865.8	- \$1,120.4	- \$1,536.5	- \$1,115.1
BCR	- 0.44	- 0.22	- 0.10	- 0.18	- 0.30	- 0.16
O&M Net Savings	- \$265.7	- \$238.5	- \$206.5	- \$223.5	- \$387.4	- \$182.5

* Discounted at 3% rate

As discussed in this analysis, the main driver for the BCR is the relationship between the projected ridership levels and the estimated operating and maintenance (O&M) and capital investment costs.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is examining the benefits, costs, and investments necessary to implement passenger rail service from North Adams to Greenfield and Boston roughly parallel

¹ <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/what-is-a-benefit-cost-analysis>

to the Route 2 corridor (“the Project”). This service would link communities and surrounding areas currently not connected to the Boston area. This Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) compares the estimated costs with the benefits of such an investment. This appendix is organized as follows:

- Section 3 contains the Project description.
- Section 4 documents the BCA methodology, including key methodological components, assumptions, and the study scenarios.
- Section 5 provides ridership projections and the underlying assumptions.
- Section 6 contains a detailed explanation and calculation of the Project benefits.
- Section 7 contains a detailed explanation and calculation of the Project costs.
- Section 8 contains the detailed results of the BCA.
- Section 9 contains the sensitivity analysis under a reduced-cost scenario.

The [US Department of Transportation](#) (USDOT) defines a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) as a tool for identifying, quantifying, and comparing expected benefits and costs of an investment, action, or policy. This framework for analyzing a proposed project is a required element for many discretionary USDOT grant programs; the purpose of this document is to help assess the competitiveness of the Project for these federal funds.

For example, a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) below 1.0 (a BCR of 1.0 would indicate a project where the benefits and costs are equivalent) may indicate the need for rescoping the project, applying for a sub-component likely to have a higher BCR, or changing the development approach. A planning grant – which typically does not require a BCA – could be sought to support those efforts.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Service between Western Massachusetts and Boston along the Route 2 corridor ran for decades before being discontinued in the middle part of the 20th century. There is interest among stakeholders in the corridor to restore service to better connect to the economic, medical, recreational, and other resources statewide, in addition to increasing mobility options and enhancing safety.

This BCA considers six service alternatives outlined in Table 2. The alternatives present distinct levels of service contingent on varying approaches to the NTPR service. A key factor in developing this BCA is the overall travel time between stations. The total travel time ranges between nearly four hours in the “Lower Investment” alternative 1 to two hours, forty-eight minutes in the “Higher Investment” alternative 2.

Table 2 List of Alternatives

Alternative	Stops	Electrified	Trips per direction	Maximum Speeds ²	North Adams to Boston Run Time (HH:MM)
1 – Lower Investment	North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph	3:55
2 – Higher Investment	North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph	2:48
3 – Electrified Service	North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg, Ayer, Porter Square, North Station	Yes	5 per day	60/80 mph	2:50
4 – Full Local Service	North Adams, Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Athol, Gardner, Fitchburg, Porter Square, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph	2:59
5 – Albany Extension / Albany Connector	Albany (NY), Schenectady (NY), North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, Porter Square, North Station	No	5 per day	60/80 mph	2:49
6 – North Adams to Fitchburg with Transfer	North Adams, Greenfield, Athol, Fitchburg (connection to MBTA)	No	5 per day	60/80 mph	3:22

4 BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

The BCA provides an evaluation framework to assess the economic advantages (benefits) and disadvantages (costs) of a potential infrastructure project. Project benefits and costs are broadly defined and are quantified in monetary terms to the extent possible. Benefits include considerations such as increasing mobility (e.g., reduced overall travel time), decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, or increasing real estate values. Costs are typically the capital costs to deliver a project, although any negative impacts from a project (e.g., increased crash risk) should also be considered in an analysis.

The BCA framework involves defining a Base or “No Build” scenario, which is compared to the “Build” scenario. The No Build scenario is the continuation of the status quo where the proposed investment is not made. The BCA assesses the incremental difference between the “Build” scenario and the “No Build” scenario, which represents the net change. BCAs are forward-looking exercises which seek to assess the incremental change over a project life cycle.

² The corridor has a maximum speed of 79 mph in the MBTA territory and 60 mph in the Pan Am Southern territory across all six alternatives.

4.1 KEY METHODOLOGICAL COMPONENTS

The Project BCA is conducted in accordance with the methodology recommended by the USDOT Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs.³

The methodology includes the following key components:

- Defining existing and future conditions under the “No Build” (Base) scenario as well as under the “Build” scenario.
- Assessing the Project benefits with respect to each of the primary selection criteria defined by the USDOT over the 30 years of operations beyond the Project completion when benefits accrue and using USDOT recommended values to monetize benefits when available. Recommended monetization rates were used for auto vehicle operating costs, net crash costs, congestion costs, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission costs. Other benefits and disbenefits were quantified by relying on other industry best practices.
- Estimating the Project capital costs during Project implementation and Project operating and maintenance (O&M) costs over the 30 years of operations beyond the Project completion when benefits accrue.
- Discounting Project benefits and costs consistent with USDOT BCA Guidance using a real discount rate of seven percent, except in the case of CO₂ emissions, which are discounted at a three-percent rate (also as per USDOT BCA Guidance).

Discounting

Discounting reflects that people prefer consumption today to future consumption, and that invested capital is productive and provides greater consumption in the future. Properly applied, discounting can tell us how much future benefits and costs are worth today. For example, \$1,000,000 thirty years from now has a present value of approximately \$130,000 today when discounted at 7 percent per year.

4.2 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The assessment of the Project benefits and costs associated with the Northern Tier project involves the following key assumptions:

- The evaluation period includes the design, engineering, and construction of the Project during which capital expenditures are undertaken (Project Implementation Period), plus 30 years of operations beyond the Project completion within which to evaluate ongoing benefits and costs (Project Operating Period).
- This analysis uses 2023 as “Year 1” for construction of the project and all costs and benefits are expressed in 2023 dollars. However, this should not be construed as a commitment by MassDOT

³ <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-01/Benefit%20Cost%20Analysis%20Guidance%202023%20Update.pdf>

to begin construction in 2023 or any other year. The Project Implementation Period for this analysis is the following for each of the *Northern Tier* six alternatives:

- Alternative 1 (“Lower Investment”): 2023-2025
 - Alternative 2 (“Higher Investment”): 2023-2026
 - Alternative 3 (“Electrified Service”): 2023-2027
 - Alternative 4 (“Full Local Service”): 2023-2026
 - Alternative 5 (“Albany Extension / Albany Connector”): 2023-2026
 - Alternative 6 (“Fitchburg transfer to MBTA Commuter Rail”): 2023-2025
- The Project Operating Period consists of thirty years following each Implementation period stated above. Project benefits begin in the calendar year immediately following final construction.
 - Alternative 1 (“Lower Investment”): 2026-2055
 - Alternative 2 (“Higher Investment”): 2027-2056
 - Alternative 3 (“Electrified Service”): 2028-2057
 - Alternative 4 (“Full Local Service”): 2027-2056
 - Alternative 5 (“Albany Extension / Albany Connector”): 2027-2056
 - Alternative 6 (“Fitchburg transfer to MBTA Commuter Rail”): 2026-2055
 - Since most benefits are calculated on a per-passenger-mile-traveled (PMT) basis, one core assumption is that PMT levels remain constant for each alternative during the entirety of the Operating Period. This assumption is consistent with employment and population projections along the corridor.
 - In the absence of the project, it is assumed that potential riders will rely on private vehicles instead, using an average occupancy rate of 1.67 passengers per car, as per USDOT BCA Guidance.³
 - All Project benefits and costs are conservatively assumed to occur at the end of each calendar year for the purposes of present value discounting.
 - Monetary values of Project costs and benefits are expressed in constant 2021 dollars (or 2021 dollars). In instances where Project cost estimates are obtained in historical dollar years other than 2021 dollars, the analysis uses the appropriate U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Consumer Price Index (CPI)⁴ to adjust the values. Annual CPI averages are used for the defined 2021 dollars and for other years for which more specific dates are not available. Otherwise, monthly CPI values are applied according to the source of the value that needs to be converted to 2021 dollars.

4.3 “BUILD” AND “NO BUILD” SCENARIOS

The analysis of the Project assessed the balance between costs and benefits resulting from the construction of the Project, including the long-term benefits to both users and non-users. This is accomplished by comparing the “Build” scenario relative to the “No Build” scenario.

The “No Build” (Base) scenario would consist of not implementing any of the six Northern Tier rail alternatives. No benefits or costs are assumed for this scenario.

The “Build” scenarios would entail the completion of any of the six Northern Tier rail alternatives, each analyzed individually. Each scenario would include the capital costs associated with construction until the Project is completed, then routine operational and maintenance costs once the rail line is operated over the 30-year Operating Period. Except for property value increases, all the benefits are shown as avoided costs relative to the “No Build” scenario.

5 RIDERSHIP PROJECTIONS

Ridership projections provided the estimated annual number of unlinked passenger trips (UPT) for each origin-destination (O-D) pair. Total mileage and travel times between O-D pairs was used to estimate passenger miles traveled (PMT) and passenger hours traveled (PHT). For this BCA, PHT were not used since no significant differences in travel times are expected between the “Build” and “No Build” (private vehicles) scenarios. Each alternative’s annual PMT was calculated by multiplying each O-D pair mileage by the same O-D pair annual UPT, and then by adding these results for all involved O-D pairs under each alternative. Annual PMT by alternative are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Annual PMT by Alternative

Alternative	Annual PMT
Alternative 1 – “Lower Investment”	3,297,137
Alternative 2 – “Higher Investment”	5,724,267
Alternative 3 – “Electrified Service”	10,020,074
Alternative 4 – “Full Local Service”	9,406,889
Alternative 5 – “Albany Extension / Albany Connector”	5,651,343
Alternative 6 – “Fitchburg Transfer to MBTA Commuter Rail”	70,377

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

⁴ <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/>

6 PROJECT BENEFITS

Project benefits included safety, avoided road wear and tear, avoided congestion, avoided emissions, and property value increases near the proposed station areas. These benefits are described in more detail below.

6.1 SAFETY BENEFITS

The benefits of traveling by rail instead of by personal vehicle are translated into monetary equivalents for the analysis. The safety benefits assessed in this analysis are based on avoided auto crashes resulting from the avoided auto VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) due to the Northern Tier rail alternatives (i.e., people taking the train rather than driving). Safety benefits result from the reduction in the number of predicted annual crashes from the “Build” scenario relative to the “No-Build” scenario. The estimation of these benefits involved the following:

- **Auto:** Obtaining historical auto crash rates at the county level for the different segments. These crashes represent the “No Build” scenario.
 - When a segment goes through multiple counties, an average of the involved counties’ crash rates was used.
 - A 5-year period was analyzed to estimate the average number of annual crashes and their severity.
 - Crash data broken down at the fatal, injury, and property damage-only (PDO) crashes was available for MA counties for the June 2018 - May 2023 period,⁵ and for NY counties for the January 2017 - December 2021 period.⁶
 - Crashes were then annualized by the timeframes shown above, expressed in years.
 - In order to normalize crashes by VMT and obtain crash rates per PMT, county VMT data was estimated using 2017 Local Area Transportation Characteristics (LATCH) individual daily VMT by county,⁷ multiplied by 365 (to convert daily data to annual data), and then by the 2018 5-Year American Communities Survey (ACS) population estimates (to apply individual averages to the aggregate county population counts).⁸
 - Resulting fatal, injury, and PDO crash rates were obtained for each county.

⁵ massdot-impact-crashes-vhb.opendata.arcgis.com

⁶ data.ny.gov

⁷ <https://www7.bts.dot.gov/latch/latch-data>

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 5-Year ACS Estimates, Table B01003.

- Counties' crash rates were assigned to each segment of each alternative, according to the counties that would be driven through in each segment in the "No Build" scenario.
- Northern Tier annual rail PMT were divided by the suggested average vehicle occupancy (AVO) for all travel purposes equal to 1.67³ to obtain the number of annual VMT for each segment under the "No Build" scenario.
- Each crash type rate per VMT was multiplied by its corresponding VMT and summarized by alternative. This resulted in an estimated number of annual crashes of each type.
- Annual crashes were monetized at their corresponding monetization rate as per USDOT BCA Guidance: \$13,046,800 per fatal crash, \$307,800 per injury crash, and \$4,800 per vehicle involved in a PDO crash, in 2021 dollars.³ An annual crash savings rate per PMT was obtained for each alternative. Table 4 shows these findings.
- **Rail:** Obtaining historical rail crash rates for the area. These crashes represent the "Build" scenario.
 - 2017-2022 Form 55a data from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was obtained for the MBTA. This includes a record of killed and injured persons in each accident, as well as a sum of property damage incurred.⁹
 - Annual PMT statistics were obtained from annual MBTA profiles reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) to normalize each year's fatalities, injuries, and property damage by the number of PMT.¹⁰
 - Fatal victim, injured person, and property damage amount rates per PMT were obtained using the 5-year long series.
 - Fatal victims were monetized using USDOT BCA Guidance "K – Killed" associated cost of \$11,800,000, while injured persons were monetized using the "U – Injured" category instead, worth \$213,900.³
 - A resulting overall crash cost per PMT was obtained, equal to \$0.0081 and shown in Table 5.

⁹ <https://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/publicsite/Query/AccidentByStateRailroadSQL.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/transit-agency-profiles/massachusetts-bay-transportation-authority>

Table 4: Crash Costs under the “No Build” Scenario

Alternative	Annual Avoided Fatal Crashes	Annual Avoided Injury Crashes	Annual Fewer Vehicles Involved in PDO Crashes	Annual Savings from Avoided Crashes	Average Annual Savings per alternative PMT
Alternative 1	0.0072	0.5326	3.1433	\$273,552	\$0.083
Alternative 2	0.0133	0.9119	5.3443	\$479,595	\$0.084
Alternative 3	0.0217	1.6070	9.4944	\$823,693	\$0.082
Alternative 4	0.0190	1.3917	8.2607	\$715,454	\$0.083
Alternative 5	0.0131	0.9023	5.3159	\$473,760	\$0.084
Alternative 6	0.0002	0.0115	0.0694	\$6,391	\$0.091

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Table 5: Crash Costs under the “Build” Scenario

Year	Killed (MBTA)	Injured (MBTA)	Property Damage (MBTA)	PMT (MBTA)	Fatal Rate	Injury Rate	PDO Rate
2017	2	3	\$342,392	697,665,040	0.0000000029	0.0000000043	0.0004907685
2018	0	0	\$374,686	680,949,680	—	—	0.0005502404
2019	0	3	\$569,388	653,570,994	—	0.0000000046	0.0008711953
2020	0	0	\$51,253	513,830,968	—	—	0.0000997468
2021	0	0	\$429,887	155,056,157	—	—	0.0027724600
Average Crash Rate					0.0000000006	0.0000000018	0.0009568822
Average Monetized Crash Cost Rate					\$0.0068	\$0.0004	\$0.0010
Total Average Monetized Crash Cost Rate (All Crash Types)							\$0.0081

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Table 6 presents the safety benefits for all alternatives in undiscounted 2021 dollars. These benefits result from the annual difference between each alternative's PMT multiplied by the auto crash cost and the same PMT multiplied by the rail crash cost.

Table 6: Safety (Avoided Crash Costs) Benefits by Alternative, undiscounted 2021 dollars

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	\$246,836	—	—	—	—	\$5,821
2027	\$246,836	\$433,213	—	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2028	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2029	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2030	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2031	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2032	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2033	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2034	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2035	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2036	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2037	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2038	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2039	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2040	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2041	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2042	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2043	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2044	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2045	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2046	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2047	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2048	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2049	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2050	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2051	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2052	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2053	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2054	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2055	\$246,836	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	\$5,821
2056	—	\$433,213	\$742,505	\$705,600	\$427,969	—
2057	—	—	\$742,505	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

6.2 AVOIDED ROAD WEAR AND TEAR BENEFITS

The annual cost of maintaining the highway system in a state of good repair is lowered as more highway traffic shifts to transit and reduces roadway travel. The quantification of these benefits typically focuses on pavement maintenance costs.

Changes in VMT, whether increasing or decreasing, impact the condition of pavement over time. A decrease in VMT would lead to improved pavement conditions by reducing the wear and tear caused by automobiles. In contrast, an increase in VMT would lead to increased pavement maintenance costs. The assessment of the state of good repair (SOG) of the roadway infrastructure benefits involves multiple steps.

This benefit was calculated using a unit pavement damage cost on urban interstates of \$0.001 per auto VMT in 2000 dollars¹¹, adjusted to \$0.00157 in 2021 dollars per VMT using CPI-U,⁴ and to \$0.00094 in 2021 dollars per PMT after dividing by the suggested AVO for all travel purposes of 1.67.³ Table 7 shows the avoided road wear and tear benefits for each alternative during the different 30-year Operating Periods. Since these PMT would be traveled by rail under the “Build” scenario, “No Build” costs are equal to the difference between “No Build” and “Build” (zero costs), representing the avoided road wear and tear benefits. Note that rail infrastructure wear and tear is captured in the Project O&M costs.

¹¹ USDOT Cost Allocation Study, 2000 <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/hcas/final/five.cfm>

Table 7: Avoided Road Wear and Tear Benefits, undiscounted 2021 dollars

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	\$3,107	—	—	—	—	\$66
2027	\$3,107	\$5,394	—	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2028	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2029	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2030	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2031	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2032	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2033	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2034	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2035	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2036	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2037	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2038	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2039	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2040	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2041	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2042	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2043	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2044	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2045	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2046	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2047	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2048	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2049	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2050	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2051	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2052	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2053	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2054	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2055	\$3,107	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	\$66
2056	—	\$5,394	\$9,442	\$8,864	\$5,325	—
2057	—	—	\$9,442	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

6.3 AVOIDED CONGESTION COSTS BENEFITS

The Project will divert some travel from roadways onto rail, decreasing automobile traffic. Avoided congestion costs benefits were estimated by following the USDOT BCA Guidance recent addition of congestion monetization rates per VMT.¹² Given how the different alternatives travel through several urban and rural settings, the “All Locations” values per VMT was used, equal to \$0.109 in 2021 dollars.³ This value was later converted to a per-PMT rate by dividing it by the average vehicle occupancy (AVO) rate for all

¹² Congestion cost details can be found in the [Benefit Cost Analysis Guidance](#) in Table A-14.

purposes, equal to 1.67. Consequently, a value of \$0.065 was multiplied by each alternative's annual PMT and added for each year during the 30-year Operating Period of each alternative. Table 8 shows the total congestion costs for the "No Build" scenario. Since these PMT would be traveled by rail under the "Build" scenario, "No Build" costs are equal to the difference between "No Build" and "Build" (zero costs), representing the avoided congestion costs benefits.

Table 8: Avoided Congestion Costs Benefits, undiscounted 2021 dollars

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	\$215,202	—	—	—	—	\$4,593
2027	\$215,202	\$373,620	—	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2028	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2029	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2030	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2031	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2032	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2033	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2034	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2035	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2036	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2037	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2038	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2039	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2040	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2041	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2042	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2043	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2044	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2045	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2046	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2047	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2048	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2049	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2050	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2051	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2052	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2053	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2054	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2055	\$215,202	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	\$4,593
2056	—	\$373,620	\$654,005	\$613,983	\$368,860	—
2057	—	—	\$654,005	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

6.4 AVOIDED EMISSIONS BENEFITS

Travel diverted onto trains will reduce automobile tailpipe emissions. Emission damage costs are a function of running emission rates per pollutant (which are a function of travel speed and vehicle type), unit damage

costs per pollutant, and changes in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per vehicle type. Analyzed greenhouse gases (GHG) included carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM₁₀), sulfur oxides (SO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOC), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The assessment of the net emission cost savings due to passengers riding the *Northern Tier* rail alternatives instead of private vehicles includes the following steps:

- “No Build” scenario:
 - An average free-flow speed of 55 miles per hour was assumed for private vehicles. This input was used to obtain the emission rates per VMT for private vehicles following the “Passenger Cars” California B/C Model Version 8.1 for Year 2024.¹³ These emission rates are shown in Table 9.
 - PMT were converted to VMT using the 1.67 suggested AVO rate.³
- “Build” scenario:
 - The emission rates per VMT from the “Passenger Rail” California B/C Model Version 8.1 were used, by computing the average between the Year 2010 and Year 2040 models.¹³ The resulting emission rates are also shown in Table 9.
 - Northern Tier VMT were estimated using the system service assumptions: 10 daily trips, multiplied by a 365-day annualization rate, and multiplied again by each alternative’s respective mileage. Individual alternative results are shown in Table 10.
 - For Alternative 3, no emissions were assumed due to the electrification scenario it entails.
- Monetization:
 - After multiplying both scenarios’ emission rates by the corresponding vehicle type VMT, total emissions were monetized using the rates provided by the USDOT BCA Guidance³, and assuming monetization rates after 2050 remain constant. Because of the unavailability of CO, VOCs, and PM₁₀ monetization rates, those from California Air Resources Board EMFAC 2021 for rural areas were used instead.¹⁴ Monetization rates for 2026 and 2050, first and last year of the data source, are shown in Table 11.
 - Resulting avoided emissions benefits for all GHG except CO₂ are included in Table 12, while resulting avoided emissions benefits for CO₂ are shown in Table 13. Separating these benefits responds to the differential three-percent discount rate that is used for CO₂ emissions.

¹³ <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/data-analytics-services/transportation-economics>

¹⁴ <https://arb.ca.gov/emfac/>

Table 9: Emission Rates by Pollutant and Vehicle Type (g / VMT)

Vehicle Type	CO	CO ₂	NO _x	PM ₁₀	SO _x	VOC	PM _{2.5}
Passenger Car (55 mph)	0.833	315.190	0.067	0.001	0.003	0.014	0.001
Passenger Train (2010-40)	4.260	2,754.880	50.490	1.020	—	—	1.020

Source: California B/C Model Version 8.1.

Table 10: Northern Tier VMT by Alternative

Passenger Rail Service	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
Number of Daily One-Way Trips	10	10	10	10	10	10
Total One-Way Mileage (mi)	142	142	142	142	222	93
Annualization Rate (days)	365	365	365	365	365	365
Passenger Rail VMT	518,300	518,300	518,300	518,300	810,300	339,450

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Table 11: Initial and Final Monetization Rates by Pollutant

Year	CO ₂	NO _x	SO _x	PM _{2.5}	CO	VOC	PM ₁₀
2026	\$60.00	\$17,500	\$47,800	\$852,100	\$88.12	\$1,222.665	\$128,545.05
2050	\$88.00	\$18,900	\$51,300	\$907,600	\$88.12	\$1,222.665	\$128,545.05

Source: USDOT BCA Guidance, 2023; California Air Resources Board EMFAC, 2021.

Table 12: Avoided Emissions Benefits (except CO₂)

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	-\$16,717	—	—	—	—	-\$12,091
2027	-\$17,019	-\$10,885	—	-\$6,079	-\$21,616	-\$12,309
2028	-\$17,281	-\$11,054	\$14,917	-\$6,177	-\$21,949	-\$12,496
2029	-\$17,587	-\$11,251	\$15,179	-\$6,288	-\$22,339	-\$12,718
2030	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2031	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2032	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2033	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2034	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2035	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2036	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2037	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2038	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2039	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2040	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2041	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2042	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2043	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2044	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2045	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2046	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2047	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2048	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2049	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2050	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2051	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2052	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2053	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2054	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2055	-\$17,852	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	-\$12,908
2056	—	-\$11,422	\$15,402	-\$6,386	-\$22,675	—
2057	—	—	\$15,402	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Table 13: Avoided GHG Emissions Benefits (CO₂ only)

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	\$35,449	—	—	—	—	-\$275
2027	\$36,040	\$64,209	—	\$106,555	\$62,437	-\$280
2028	\$36,631	\$65,262	\$117,251	\$108,301	\$63,460	-\$285
2029	\$37,222	\$66,315	\$119,143	\$110,048	\$64,484	-\$289
2030	\$38,403	\$68,420	\$122,925	\$113,542	\$66,531	-\$298
2031	\$38,994	\$69,472	\$124,816	\$115,289	\$67,554	-\$303
2032	\$39,585	\$70,525	\$126,707	\$117,035	\$68,578	-\$307
2033	\$40,176	\$71,578	\$128,598	\$118,782	\$69,601	-\$312
2034	\$40,766	\$72,630	\$130,489	\$120,529	\$70,625	-\$317
2035	\$41,357	\$73,683	\$132,381	\$122,276	\$71,649	-\$321
2036	\$42,539	\$75,788	\$136,163	\$125,769	\$73,696	-\$330
2037	\$43,130	\$76,841	\$138,054	\$127,516	\$74,719	-\$335
2038	\$43,721	\$77,893	\$139,945	\$129,263	\$75,743	-\$340
2039	\$44,311	\$78,946	\$141,836	\$131,010	\$76,766	-\$344
2040	\$44,902	\$79,998	\$143,727	\$132,757	\$77,790	-\$349
2041	\$46,084	\$82,104	\$147,510	\$136,250	\$79,837	-\$358
2042	\$46,675	\$83,156	\$149,401	\$137,997	\$80,860	-\$363
2043	\$47,265	\$84,209	\$151,292	\$139,744	\$81,884	-\$367
2044	\$47,856	\$85,262	\$153,183	\$141,491	\$82,908	-\$372
2045	\$48,447	\$86,314	\$155,074	\$143,237	\$83,931	-\$376
2046	\$49,629	\$88,419	\$158,857	\$146,731	\$85,978	-\$386
2047	\$50,220	\$89,472	\$160,748	\$148,478	\$87,002	-\$390
2048	\$50,810	\$90,525	\$162,639	\$150,225	\$88,025	-\$395
2049	\$51,401	\$91,577	\$164,530	\$151,971	\$89,049	-\$399
2050	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2051	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2052	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2053	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2054	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2055	\$51,992	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	-\$404
2056	—	\$92,630	\$166,421	\$153,718	\$90,072	—
2057	—	—	\$166,421	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

6.5 PROPERTY VALUE INCREASE BENEFITS

Properties surrounding the proposed station areas will see an increase in value resulting from this new transportation service. A six percent increase in property values was estimated for the involved station surrounding areas in each alternative. These windfall increases in property values are assumed to take place upon the inauguration of each of the alternatives, and are claimed in the corresponding first year of the Operating Period. Only station areas within the North Adams - Fitchburg segment were analyzed. Table 14 shows the current real estate total values for each station, the resulting value after a six-percent increase, and the difference between both scenarios. The right hand-side of the table indicates whether the station is included (1) or not (0) in each alternative.

Table 14: Change in Total Land Value by Station Area

Town / City	Current Total Value (2021 dollars)	Total Value with 6% Premium	Δ Property Value	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
North Adams	\$226,700,595	\$240,302,631	\$13,602,036	1	1	1	1	1	1
Buckland	\$91,695,469	\$97,197,197	\$5,501,728	0	0	0	1	0	0
Shelburne	\$54,741,248	\$58,025,723	\$3,284,475	0	0	0	1	0	0
Greenfield	\$285,912,728	\$303,067,492	\$17,154,764	1	1	1	1	1	1
Athol	\$233,310,147	\$247,308,756	\$13,998,609	0	0	1	1	0	1
Gardner	\$172,136,111	\$182,464,278	\$10,328,167	0	0	0	1	0	0

Source: UMass Donahue Institute, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

After station values are assigned to the applicable alternatives, Table 15 shows the assumed property value windfall increases corresponding to each alternative upon their beginning of operations. Note that Fitchburg potential increases were omitted due to the existing rail connection to Boston.

Table 15: Property Value Increase Benefits by Alternative, undiscounted 2021 dollars

Year	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2026	\$30,756,799	—	—	—	—	\$44,755,408
2027	—	\$30,756,799	—	\$63,869,778	\$30,756,799	—
2028	—	—	\$44,755,408	—	—	—

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc., based on UMass Donahue Institute.

7 PROJECT COSTS

Costs of this project include the capital costs of upgrading existing infrastructure and building new infrastructure where needed, and the cost of running the service (e.g., fuel, crew salaries, etc.). A breakdown of these costs is presented below.

7.1 CAPITAL COSTS

Construction of the Project requires significant capital investment, which is typical of rail projects. Elements such as new railroad ties, rail, base stabilization, and bridge and tunnel work are typical components of rail upgrade projects. Capital costs for each of the six Northern Tier rail alternatives are shown in Table 16. The most expensive alternative is Alternative 3 (due to electrification), while the least is Alternative 1 (a lower

investment alternative). Costs were uniformly apportioned during each alternative's respective implementation period.

Table 16: Project Capital Costs by Alternative, undiscounted thousands of 2021 dollars

Year	Capital Costs (thousands of 2021 dollars)					
	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
2023	\$221,020	\$297,481	\$443,975	\$301,164	\$372,065	\$393,246
2024	\$221,020	\$297,481	\$443,975	\$301,164	\$372,065	\$393,246
2025	\$221,020	\$297,481	\$443,975	\$301,164	\$372,065	\$393,246
2026	—	\$297,481	\$443,975	\$301,164	\$372,065	—
2027	—	—	\$443,975	—	—	—
Total Costs	\$663,060	\$1,189,923	\$2,219,875	\$1,204,655	\$1,488,260	\$1,179,738

Source: HNTB, adjusted to 2021 dollars using CPI-U.

7.2 OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

O&M costs include the cost of running the service and include elements such as fuel (diesel or electricity), wages for train crew and regular maintenance of tracks. O&M costs for each of the six Northern Tier rail alternatives are shown in Table 17. Note that O&M Costs are the same for alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4. O&M costs for alternatives 5 and 6 differ because Alternative 5 extends beyond North Adams to the west (more expensive), while Alternative 6 only reaches Fitchburg to the east (less expensive). This is related to annual revenue miles having been used as the core input for O&M cost estimates.

Net costs (or net savings) had to be calculated for each alternative against the No Build scenario. Operating and Maintenance costs for each alternative also took into account the personal vehicle operating costs avoided for passengers using rail instead of driving a personal vehicle, as shown in Table 17. These estimates are the product of the USDOT BCA Guidance suggested vehicle operating cost for light duty vehicles, equal to \$0.46 per VMT in 2021 dollars,³ and the annual number of VMT for passengers not able to choose the rail option under the "No Build" scenario. VMT are estimated by dividing each alternative's annual PMT by the USDOT BCA Guidance suggested AVO rate for all travel purposes of 1.67 passengers per vehicle.³ Note that unlike O&M costs, which depend on service statistics, the "No Build" cost of travel is affected by the ridership forecasts and each marginal PMT that would divert modes.

Table 17: Project O&M Costs and O&M Net Costs by Alternative, undiscounted millions of 2021 dollars

Annual Cost (Millions of 2021 dollars\$)	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
O&M Costs	\$29.6	\$29.6	\$29.6	\$29.6	\$46.4	\$19.31
Vehicle Operating Costs ("No Build")	-\$1.5	-\$2.6	-\$4.6	-\$4.3	-\$2.6	-\$0.03
O&M Net Costs	\$28.1	\$27.0	\$25.0	\$25.3	\$43.8	\$19.3

Source: HNTB, Cambridge Systematics, Inc. Note that some values may not add up due to rounding.

8 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

8.1 EVALUATION MEASURES

The BCA converts potential gains (benefits) and losses (costs) into monetary units and compares them. The following benefit-cost evaluation measures are included in this BCA:

- **Net Present Value (NPV):** NPV compares the net benefits (benefits minus costs) after being discounted to present values using the discount rate. The NPV provides a perspective on the overall dollar magnitude of cash flows over time in today's dollar terms.
- **Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR):** The present value of incremental benefits is divided by the present value of incremental costs to yield the BCR. The BCR expresses the relation of discounted benefits to discounted costs as a measure of the extent to which a project's benefits either exceed or fall short of the costs.

8.2 BCA RESULTS

This section provides the overall results of the BCA, which combine the monetary gains from the Project benefits and the monetary Project costs. Table 18 presents the Net Present Value (NPV), or the overall cash value of the benefits minus the costs, and the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), or the value of the overall benefits value divided by the costs.

Table 18: Massachusetts Northern Tier Rail Alternatives Benefit-Cost Analysis Summary, discounted millions of 2021 dollars

BCA Metric	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
O&M Net Savings	- \$265.7	- \$238.5	- \$206.5	- \$223.5	- \$387.4	- \$182.5
Safety Benefits	\$2.3	\$3.8	\$6.1	\$6.2	\$3.8	\$0.1
Avoided Road Wear and Tear	~\$0.0	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	~\$0.0
Avoided Congestion	\$2.0	\$3.3	\$5.4	\$5.4	\$3.3	\$0.1
Avoided Emissions (except CO ₂)	- \$0.2	- \$0.1	\$0.1	- \$0.1	- \$0.2	- \$0.1
Avoided Emissions (CO ₂ only)*	\$0.8	\$1.3	\$2.4	\$2.2	\$1.3	~\$0.0
Property Value Increase	\$21.9	\$20.5	\$27.9	\$42.6	\$20.5	\$31.9
Total Benefits	- \$238.8	- \$209.5	- \$164.5	- \$167.0	- \$358.7	- \$150.6
Total Costs	\$542.1	\$941.7	\$1,701.3	\$953.4	\$1,177.8	\$964.5
NPV	- \$780.9	- \$1,151.2	- \$1,865.8	- \$1,120.4	- \$1,536.5	- \$1,115.1
BCR	- 0.44	- 0.22	- 0.10	- 0.18	- 0.30	- 0.16
O&M Net Savings	- \$265.7	- \$238.5	- \$206.5	- \$223.5	- \$387.4	- \$182.5

* Discounted at 3% rate

9 SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS: FIFTY-PERCENT CAPITAL AND O&M COST REDUCTION

Table 19 shows the results from halving capital and O&M costs. The Net Present Value range under these reduced cost circumstances ranges from -\$370 million to -\$893 million.

Table 19: Impact of Halving Capital and O&M Costs to Break-Even Ridership Multipliers (millions of 2021 dollars)

BCA Metric	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6
O&M Net Savings	-\$125.68	-\$107.58	-\$84.20	-\$92.59	-\$182.21	-\$91.08
Safety Benefits	\$2.30	\$3.80	\$6.10	\$6.20	\$3.80	\$0.10
Avoided Road Wear and Tear	~\$0.0	\$0.10	\$0.10	\$0.10	\$0.10	~\$0.0
Avoided Congestion	\$2.00	\$3.30	\$5.40	\$5.40	\$3.30	\$0.10
Avoided Emissions (except CO ₂)	-\$0.20	-\$0.10	\$0.10	-\$0.10	-\$0.20	-\$0.10
Avoided Emissions (CO ₂ only)*	\$0.80	\$1.30	\$2.40	\$2.20	\$1.30	~\$0.0
Property Value Increase	\$21.90	\$20.50	\$27.90	\$42.60	\$20.50	\$31.90
Total Benefits	-\$98.88	-\$78.68	-\$42.20	-\$36.19	-\$153.41	-\$59.08
Total Costs	\$271.05	\$470.85	\$850.65	\$476.70	\$588.90	\$482.25
NPV	-\$369.93	-\$549.53	-\$892.85	-\$512.89	-\$742.31	-\$541.33
BCR	-\$0.36	-\$0.17	-\$0.05	-\$0.08	-\$0.26	-\$0.12

* Discounted at 3% rate