

May 8, 2013

Honorable Richard A. Davey
Secretary and Chief Executive Officer
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

RE: Extension of Rail Service to Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to communicate our enthusiastic support for the extension of the New Haven/Springfield Amtrak Shuttle to serve our communities of Holyoke, Greenfield and Northampton. We believe this new service will deliver many positive economic impacts for downtown/urban revitalization, tourism, residential quality of life and business/job development.

The Knowledge Corridor Feasibility Study, which the current construction project is based on, indicates that expanded rail service can generate economic benefits specific to each of our communities. Rail service to Greenfield would spur residential and downtown revitalization, Holyoke would benefit from rail service strengthening their downtown assets including the Green High Performance Computing Center and Canal Walk, and Northampton's arts, cultural and tourism assets would be strengthened by rail service offering a 3 hour travel time to New York City.

Over the past 15 years, regional rail ridership has boomed nationally and locally. Amtrak ridership numbers show that Amherst ridership surged 50% from 2006 to 2012 (8700 passengers to 13,000) and Springfield ridership rose 30% at the same time with 110,261 to 143,605 passengers. Extending the Springfield Shuttle north to Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield would positively increase these ridership numbers further.

We appreciate the Patrick Administration's proactive efforts to strengthen our regional rail assets with the rerouting of the Amtrak Vermonter, and your current negotiations to acquire the right-of-way for the Springfield to Vermont rail line. These landmark efforts, along with the extension of the Springfield Shuttle, can be a solid foundation for positive growth in our communities and the entire region.



WILLIAM F. MARTIN
Mayor of Greenfield



ALEX B. MORSE
Mayor of Holyoke



DAVID J. NARKEWICZ
Mayor of Northampton

