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For Immediate Release – Monday, October 26, 2015

Mayors of Northampton, Holyoke and Greenfield Call for Expanded Rail Service

Joint Letter to Secretary Pollack Cites Increased Amtrak Ridership

With Amtrak ridership up 67% between Greenfield, Northampton and Holyoke on the Knowledge Corridor, Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse and Greenfield Mayor William Martin have issued a joint letter to Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack calling for expanded rail service. The letter states, “We are writing to express our strong support for increased rail service between Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke and Springfield.”

The letter voices support for a plan by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to start preparing surplus locomotives and coaches for passenger service. Another alternative for expanded rail service could be a partnership with Connecticut’s planned “New Hartford Line” service linking Springfield, Hartford and New Haven scheduled for 2017.

Mayor David Narkewicz commented, “Expanded rail service will not only increase our frequency of service but extend ridership to include more types of travelers such as traditional commuters, students, visiting tourists, and local residents seeking rail connections to the Northeast.”

Mayor William Martin commented, “While providing a return to rail service for four major cities on the Knowledge Corridor is a critical first step, additional trains on a rider-friendly schedule will benefit the entire Pioneer Valley economically, while offering choices for new tourism and development gains.”

Mayor Alex Morse commented, “Enacting expanded rail service is critical to the continued economic growth of our Cities and our larger metropolitan area. Connecting people to jobs and amenities in this way will increase business opportunities where it's needed most: our urban cores.”

Mayor Narkewicz also noted, “While regular service to Springfield is our current goal, we are also excited about the long term planning for potential Amtrak service to Montreal or Massachusetts DOT service from Springfield to Boston. All of these potentials offer easier connections to distant locations and economic development benefits as well.”

The letter notes that the current projected 2015 Vermonter ridership for the 3 cities will be 20,000 or nearly 25% of the total 2014 Vermonter ridership of 84,000. The Vermonter operates 2 trains per day between Washington, DC and White River Junction, Vermont.

October 26, 2015

Honorable Stephanie Pollack
Secretary and Chief Executive Officer
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

RE: Increased Rail Service to Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield

Dear Secretary Pollack:

We are writing to express our strong support for increased rail service between Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke and Springfield. Since the Amtrak Vermonter began operating along the corridor in January, ridership has increased by 67%. Based on those numbers, annual 2015 Vermonter ridership for ridership for Greenfield, Northampton and Holyoke will be over 20,000, which is nearly 25% of the total Vermonter annual ridership of 84,000.

As you know, there are several interesting rail service plans emerging. One plan is that MassDOT will move forward in 2015 to prepare a surplus MBTA locomotive and coaches for passenger service between Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield. Another potential for expanded rail service is the emerging Connecticut DOT New Hartford Line which will serve New Haven, Hartford, Springfield and perhaps Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield.

The Knowledge Corridor Feasibility Study states that expanded rail service can generate economic benefits specific to each of our communities. Rail service to Greenfield would support their growing downtown arts, food and culture community, including the Greenfield Galleries and the soon to open Arts Block venue and performing space. Holyoke would strengthen its core downtown assets which include its arts & innovation district, hundreds of new housing units in the pipeline, and a myriad of small and start-up businesses. Northampton's arts, cultural, educational and tourism attractions would be easily accessed by rail service offering a 3 hour travel time to New York City.

With Vermonter service achieving very positive ridership numbers, we look forward to working with you on establishing regular rail service to the new Springfield Union Station Multi-Modal Transportation Facility. The extension of the Springfield service can lay the foundation for positive growth in many exciting ways for our communities and the entire Knowledge Corridor region

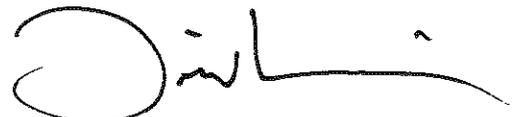
Sincerely,



WILLIAM F. MARTIN
Mayor of Greenfield



ALEX B. MORSE
Mayor of Holyoke



DAVID J. NARKEWICZ
Mayor of Northampton



cc. Pioneer Valley Legislative Delegation