Berkshire Flyer
Working Group

February 13, 2018
Agenda

• Report Content

• Next Steps
Report Outline

- **Introduction and Background** - Study goals; Overview
- **Alternatives** - Potential routes -description of route from Pittsfield to NYC and service options
- **Capital Cost Estimates** - Assessing capital needs for each option
- **Operating Cost Estimates** - Information from Amtrak
- **Last Mile Connections** - Sponsored services and transit availability
- **Fare Analysis** - Examined fare structure
- **Market Analysis** - Tourist market, Second home owners, etc.; Peer comparisons on ridership; Travel demand; Regional benefits (material provided by Working Group)
- **Next Steps** - Recommendations: State, Regional, and Local actions

*Final report contents still dependent on what Amtrak can get us*
Framework for Berkshire Flyer Service

- Provide a one-seat-ride from New York to Pittsfield.

- Rely on Amtrak to negotiate access with CSX.

- Provide service from July 4th weekend to Labor Day weekend, with potential to extend service to weekends in the fall through Columbus Day weekend.

- Develop service schedules that focus on bringing weekend travelers from New York to Berkshires.

- Optimal service schedules would allow passengers to arrive in Pittsfield by 4 PM on Fridays and depart Pittsfield in the late afternoon on Sundays.
Potential Berkshire Flyer Customers

1. Trips to Berkshires from Manhattan
   • 435,000  Annual Trips by all modes (*not limited to tourism*)

2. Hotel/Motel Stays
   • 52,000  Bookings estimated during July & August *(all visitors, excludes B&Bs) *assuming 2.5 days stayed/booking
   • 227,500  Bookings Estimated Year-Round *(all visitors, excludes B&Bs)*

3. Tourism Data *(from visitor data shared with MassDOT)*
   • 12 – 18%  Attraction Visits From New York Metro Area

Top Reasons People Visit

79.5%  See museums/historic site
59.2%  See performing arts
36.9%  Engage in outdoor recreation

4. Tourism Season
   • July and August are the peak

Note: excludes small establishments, including inns, B&Bs, and those with under 10 rooms
What is now offered? Existing Travel Options

**Fridays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
<th>One-Way Cost</th>
<th>Scheduled Travel Time*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonanza</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$47</td>
<td>4 hrs 5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Bus/ Bonanza</td>
<td>@ ALB</td>
<td>$41</td>
<td>4 hrs 30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amtrak</td>
<td>@ ALB</td>
<td>$54</td>
<td>4 hrs 40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Pan</td>
<td>@ SPG</td>
<td>$47</td>
<td>4 hrs 40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greyhound</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$53</td>
<td>5 hrs 40 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes traffic impacts on service

**Sundays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
<th>One-Way Cost</th>
<th>Scheduled Travel Time*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Pan</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>4 hrs 5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonanza/ Adirondack</td>
<td>@ NY</td>
<td>$51</td>
<td>5 hrs 10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amtrak</td>
<td>@ ALB</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>5 hrs 11 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Bus/ Greyhound</td>
<td>@ ALB</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>5 hrs 35 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greyhound</td>
<td>@ NJ</td>
<td>$51</td>
<td>5 hrs 50 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes traffic impacts on service

**Roundtrip Price Range: $73 - $126**
What possible rail services were studied?

Rail Alternatives

- **Option 1A**
  - Train #255, *Dep. 2:20PM NYP  Arr. 6:10PM Pittsfield*
  - Operating costs: awaiting Amtrak pricing
  - No capital costs found (pending Amtrak’s information)
  - Builds on availability of existing Amtrak service to/from Albany

- **Option 1B**
  - Express; assumes that Amtrak can skip existing stops or add new express service.
  - Not known if station skips would be acceptable
  - If new express, depends on equipment and Penn Station capacity, both highly limited
  - Desired slot around 12:00 PM

- **Option 2**
  - Implementation challenges
    - Requires new track and use of CSX route not now used for passenger service
    - Requires large capital investment for a new 0.6 mile track to be added (excavation, drainage, signal system will comprise majority of cost)
  - Difficult for Amtrak to price or analyze this route

- **Working Group agreed to focus on Option 1A as most immediately viable.**
## Travel Demand Data

### New York County to Berkshire County (with existing Amtrak service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Annual Trips</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto (non-business)</td>
<td>334,000</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto (business)</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>435,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Traveler Analysis Framework, 2008

- FHWA data suggests rail service currently captures 1.5% of market annually
- In Amtrak surveys, 8% of Amtrak riders state they would not make the trip if rail was not available
- How large is the seasonal latent demand that can be captured by a Berkshire Flyer service?
Are there seats available to fill through Option 1A?
- There is some capacity on the existing trains:
  - Capacity is most limited from May to June
  - Late night trains have greatest capacity available, but not a preferred option
  - 2:20 PM train averages 255 passengers | 79.9% occupied
  - Indication that 50+ seats will be available on weekends in July – September
  - FFY 2017 data suggests that seat capacity would exist if service operates in July or later
Last-Mile Connections are Needed

• Need to connect visitors to cultural attractions, dining, lodging without needing their own personal vehicle
  – Train to destination links
  – “Car free” stays
  – Range of options: shuttles, TNCs, BRTA, etc.

• CapeFlyer addressed need by promoting the following:
  – Shuttles to the ferries to Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard
  – CCRTA bus connections to the trains to the Cape cities and towns
  – Connections to Inter-city bus carriers
    • Between Inter-city and CCRTA buses - connections to all Cape communities
  – Free local Hyannis trolley
  – Pilot Programs with TNC companies
  – Connections to Rental Car companies and Taxi/Limo services
  – Special dedicated bike coach
    • Bike travel has been very popular in conjunction with the region’s bike infrastructure investment
Concepts for Moving Forward

• Form a tourism working group that could:
  – Investigate and support last-mile options
    • Private shuttles, fully funded BRTA service, bike rentals, etc.
  – Build marketing strategies (packages, joint ticket sales, etc.)
  – Target marketing to identified audiences

• Reach out to similar areas (ex: Rutland, VT; Lake George/Fort Edward-Glens Falls, NY; Freeport, ME; Williamsburg, VA) to identify successful methods used to gauge and support other tourist rail services.

• Continue to work with Amtrak to refine capacity estimates and access requirements.
Report Schedule – Subject to Change

• **February 15/16** – Cost information expected from Amtrak

• **February 20** – Working Group comments – to extent possible. Comments received after February 20 will be incorporated to extent that time allows.

• **March 1** – Report due to Legislature

*Final report contents will depend on Amtrak information.*