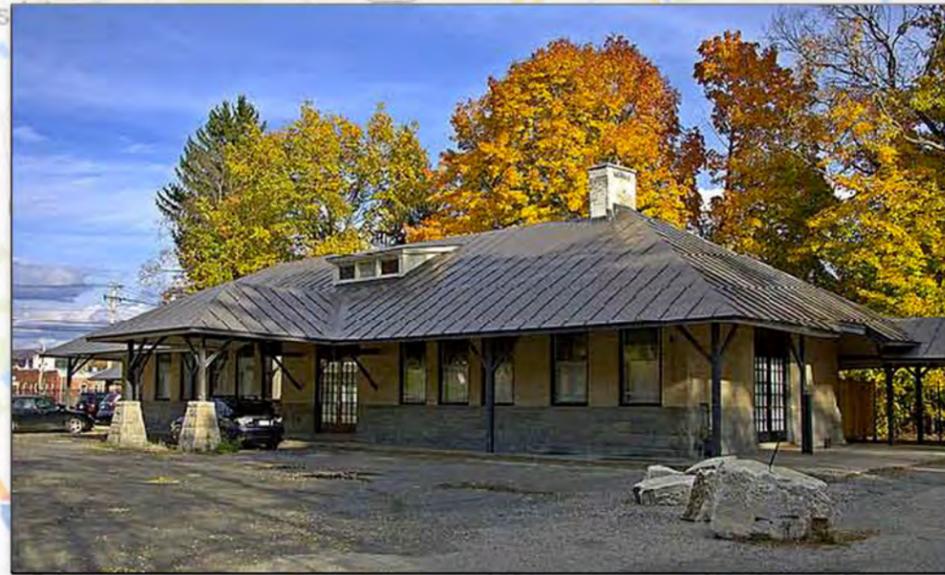


BERKSHIRE PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATION & DESIGN ANALYSIS





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The Housatonic Railroad Company (HRRC) has proposed re-establishing passenger rail service between Danbury, Connecticut and Pittsfield, Massachusetts on the former Berkshire Line. The passenger rail service between these two locations last operated in 1971 shortly after the Penn Central Transportation Company filed for bankruptcy. The HRRC proposal would once again make it possible for a passenger boarding the passenger train at Grand Central Station in New York City to reach Pittsfield, Massachusetts by train in approximately four (4) hours and vice versa. For the HRRC proposal to become reality, a significant capital investment in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York will need to be made to upgrade the rail infrastructure along the Berkshire Line. Massachusetts has made an initial commitment to the project by entering into an agreement to acquire the Berkshire Line from HRRC and committing \$35 million dollars to upgrade the rail infrastructure. Connecticut has not yet made a commitment, but discussions are underway between the state and HRRC.

The majority of the existing rail infrastructure is nearly a century old in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. The worn out jointed rails and ties are not suitable for the safe operation of a passenger rail service and must be replaced. Another essential component of the rail infrastructure are the passenger rail stations. The ideal passenger rail station will meet the needs of the community, the needs of the region and the operational needs of the proposed passenger

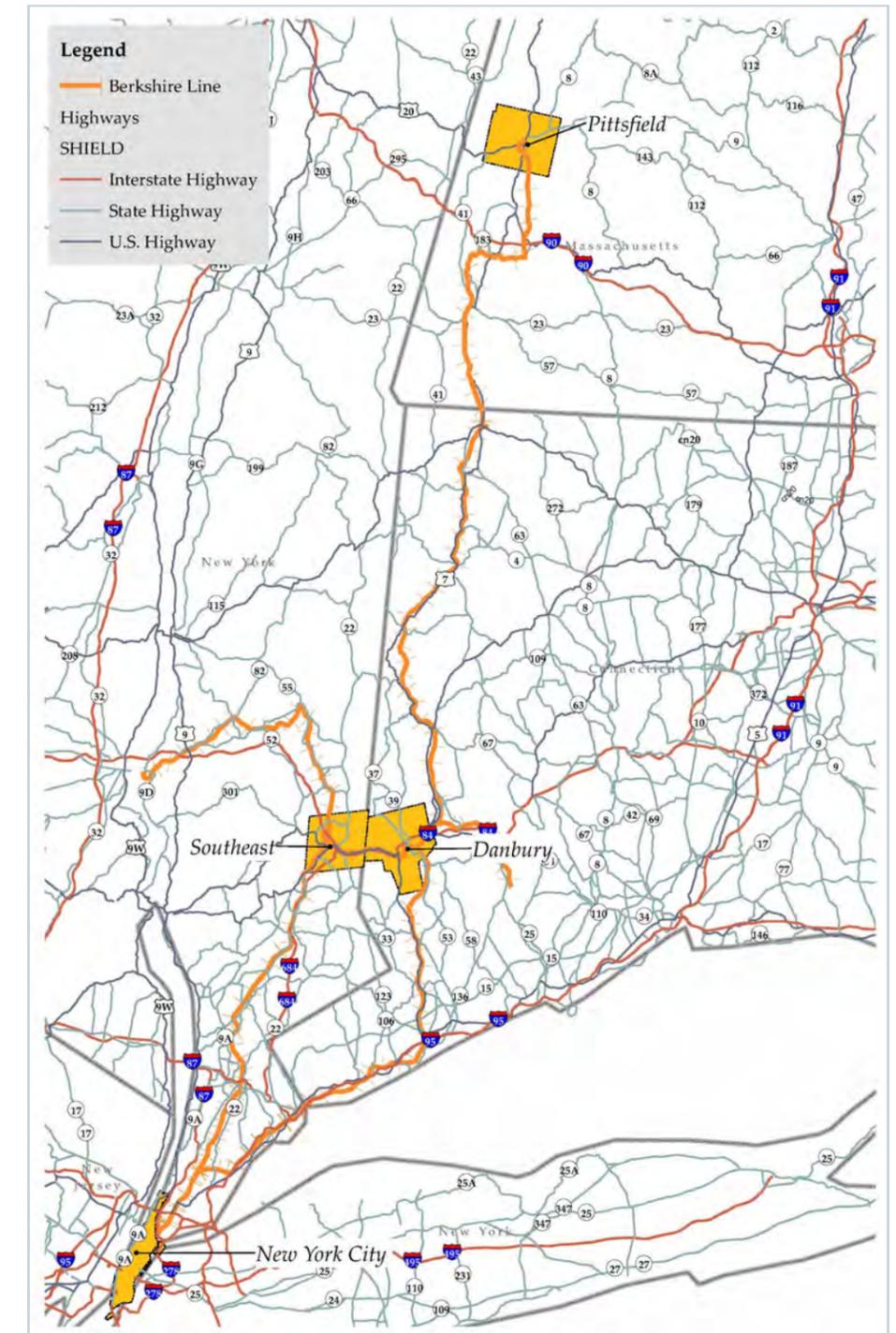
rail service. In some instances, the nearly century old historic passenger rail stations may meet these needs and in other instances, new locations may better serve them.

To address this issue, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) partnered with HRRC to conduct this passenger rail station location and design analysis with the primary objective of identifying the most feasible and advantageous locations for passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line. Other objectives of this study include developing recommendations for passenger rail station design, facilities and amenities; evaluating and refining the preliminary railroad operations analysis; and assessing the potential economic, environmental, land use and community benefits and impacts of the proposed passenger rail service and the recommended passenger rail station locations. Funding for this study was provided through a Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation Grant awarded to the BRPC by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The development of the passenger rail station location recommendations follow the Sustainable Development Principles of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and smart growth principles and principles from Sustainable Berkshires (the regional plan for Berkshire County). In accordance with these principles, a conscious effort was made to identify passenger rail station locations in mixed use downtown areas that have existing pedestrian connectivity and existing commercial establishments that would benefit from a passenger rail station. The most

significant challenge in locating a passenger rail station in a downtown area was finding sites with sufficient room for parking. Thus, for the recommended downtown passenger rail stations a smaller amount of parking, compared to a regional passenger rail station, will likely be available. The limited amount of parking at the downtown locations should not be problematic as an overwhelming majority of passengers using the service are projected to be traveling north to Berkshire County and will not have a need for parking. In addition, the passenger rail stations proposed for the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Sheffield (if one is constructed) are recommended to function as larger regional stations and will provide more parking for southbound passengers. Only when no feasible location can be found in a downtown areas does BRPC support the construction of a passenger rail station outside of the mixed use downtown areas unless operational needs dictate otherwise. Stations located outside of downtown areas would likely diminish the economic benefit to the communities, and severely diminish the potential for the proposed passenger rail service to provide intra-county transportation for residents and visitors.

Map 1: Locus Map



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Key Findings

1. **The rail infrastructure along the Berkshire Line needs total replacement.** All of the nearly century old existing jointed rail and ties need to be replaced with new ties and welded rail. The at-grade public crossings require safety upgrades and passenger rail stations need to be retrofitted or built new. The estimated total cost of the rail infrastructure improvements in both Connecticut and Massachusetts exceeds \$200 million dollars.
2. **With input from HRRC, the ideal minimum spacing between stations was determined to be ten (10) miles apart for the passenger rail service to operate efficiently.**
3. **Initial passenger rail stations are recommended for the City of Pittsfield, the Town of Lee and the Town of Great Barrington.** Passenger rail stations located in these locations will best serve the needs of the region and the operational needs of the proposed passenger rail service.
4. **The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center on Columbus Avenue is the recommended location for a regional passenger rail station in the City of Pittsfield.** A passenger rail station located at this location, which is the site of an active regional and inter-city bus depot and passenger train station (Amtrak- Boston to Chicago), best serves the local needs of the community, supports economic development along North Street and adjacent commercial areas, and facilitates intra-county transportation.

Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center



5. **A new passenger rail station to be constructed on the west side of the downtown area on Railroad Street is the recommended location for a passenger rail station in the Town of Lee.** A new passenger rail station in this location is expected to serve the needs of the local community, support existing commercial establishments in the downtown area, further economic development, and facilitate intra-county transportation. Two possible scenarios are provided in this report.
6. **The reuse of the existing historic passenger rail station site in the downtown area on Castle Street is the recommended location for a passenger rail station in the Town of Great Barrington.** The reuse of the historic passenger rail station site is expected to serve the needs of the local community, support the existing commercial establishments in the downtown area, further economic development, and facilitate intra-county transportation.
7. **The Town of Sheffield is conditionally recommended as an initial location for a regional passenger rail station.** The southern part of

Sheffield may be an ideal location for a passenger rail station to serve Sheffield and northwestern Connecticut if a passenger rail station is not located in North Canaan, Connecticut. A passenger rail station in both locations would not allow the passenger rail service to operate efficiently and is not recommended. **HRRC owns a ten (10) acre site (State Line) in this area that is recommended for use as a passenger rail station.**

8. **A passenger rail station is not recommended for the Town of Lenox because it is located within ten (10) miles of the City of Pittsfield and the rail corridor passes through the less densely developed area of the town.** Lenox residents will have access to the passenger rail service at the Pittsfield station or the Lee station.
9. **A passenger rail station is not recommended for the Town of Stockbridge because it is located within ten (10) miles of Great Barrington and the potential for additional economic development in areas adjacent to the potential passenger rail station locations is not as great as the other communities.** Stockbridge residents will have access to the passenger rail service at the Lee station or the Great Barrington station.
10. The attendees at the public meetings held throughout the study period and respondents to an online survey expressed strong support for the return of passenger rail service to Berkshire County. The attendees/respondents also expressed an interest in using the proposed passenger rail service for travel within the Berkshire region and to New York City.

11. The attendees at the public meetings and respondents to the online survey identified priorities for the types of amenities and services offered at a Berkshire passenger rail station. Strong pedestrian connectivity around a passenger rail station was indicated as a top priority. The convenience of ticket purchasing and access to and from the passenger rail station were also identified as top priorities by attendees/respondents.
12. Further refinement of the 2010 Market Street Research (MSR) marketing study suggests that **over a five (5) year period annual ridership between Berkshire County and points south will increase to 1,086,874 one-way fares per year.**
13. The MSR marketing study suggests that **peak demand for the passenger rail service will be on weekends in the summer months as a large majority of the passengers traveling to Berkshire County will be visitors as opposed to commuters.** The MSR marketing study also showed demand in the fall and winter months as well.
14. The MSR marketing study suggests that **travel options at the passenger rail stations are an important consideration for those who would use the proposed passenger rail service.** Efforts will be made to coordinate departures/arrivals with BRTA's schedule.
15. The report titled "Economic Benefits of Housatonic Railroad Passenger Service" (Economic Report) authored by the Center for Creative Community Development at Williams College projects that the economic benefits to the region over a ten year period (3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

years of construction and 7 years of operations) are expected to be significant. **The increase in economic output during the first decade of the project is expected to be in excess of \$635 million dollars with an average of 610 new jobs created.**

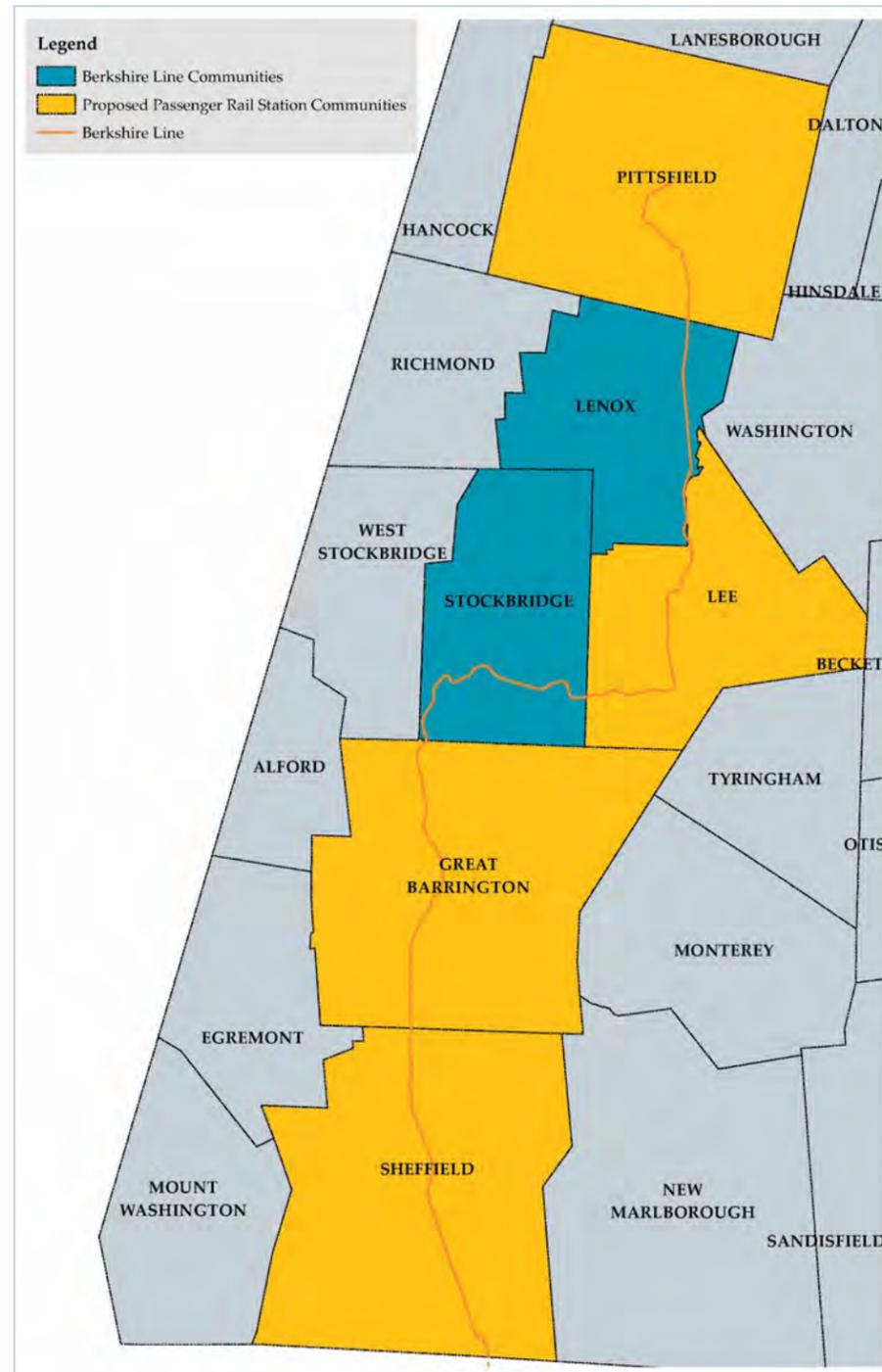
16. The Economic Report suggests that **the tourism industry in the region will expand with an estimated 126 new jobs created and an additional \$12.5 million dollars in economic output.**

17. The Economic Report suggests that **local governments in the region could collect approximately \$2.6 million dollars more annually, if the passenger rail service was operating.**

18. **Noise impacts from the proposed passenger rail service are not expected to be significant throughout the majority of the rail corridor.** The most noticeable noise impacts will occur around the public at-grade crossings where federal regulations require locomotive engineers to routinely sound the locomotive's horn. Exceptions to the federal regulations allow communities to establish a "quiet zone" where routine horn sounding at public at-grade crossings is not permitted.

19. **Vibration impacts from the proposed passenger rail service are not expected to be significant throughout a majority of the rail corridor.** The replacement of the existing jointed rail with welded rail is expected to decrease vibration and noise impacts. Mitigation measures can be taken for structures located close to the rail corridor if vibration impacts become an

Map 2: Proposed Passenger Rail Station Communities



issue.

Summary of Recommendations

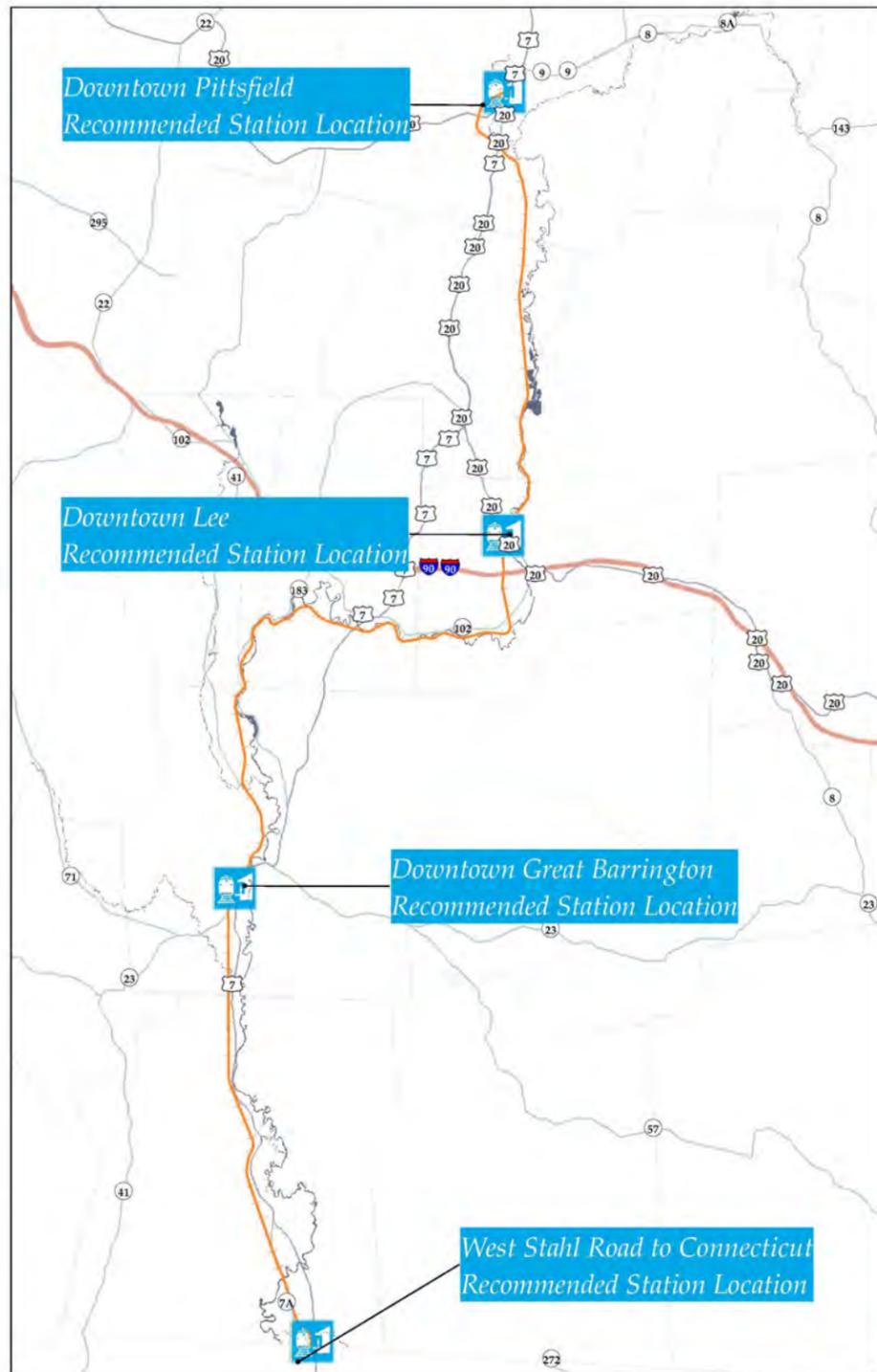
- ◆ MassDOT is encouraged to make the necessary improvements and upgrades to the rail infrastructure necessary for a passenger rail service to be operated on the Berkshire Line.
- ◆ HRRC and the State of Connecticut are encouraged to continue collaborating on obtaining funds for the necessary improvements and upgrades to the rail infrastructure necessary for a passenger rail service to be operated on the Berkshire Line.
- ◆ MassDOT is encouraged to engage the State of Connecticut to assist with collaboration efforts to inform federal legislators of the needs and benefits associated with the re-introduction of the proposed passenger rail service.
- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to construct the passenger rail stations in the locations recommended in this report or make the funding available for such construction.
- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to proactively address potential noise and vibration impacts during the reconstruction of the rail infrastructure.
- ◆ HRRC is encouraged to pursue the acquisition of the rolling stock (locomotives, passenger cars, etc.) necessary to operate the proposed passenger rail service.
- ◆ BRPC is encouraged to facilitate a dis-

cussion between the BRTA, MassDOT, 1Berkshire (Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitors Bureau) and the municipalities recommended for initial passenger rail stations to determine potential station ownership scenarios and to identify what partnerships may need to be developed to operate a successful passenger rail station.

- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to work with the BRTA and other providers of transportation to ensure that transportation is available at the passenger rail stations when passengers arrive.
- ◆ HRRC and the BRTA are encouraged to develop a plan for how the proposed passenger rail service can be used by residents and visitors for intra-county transportation.
- ◆ BRPC is encouraged to work cooperatively with its counterpart in northwest Connecticut (Northwest Hills Council of Governments) to finalize the location of a joint facility to serve Sheffield and North Canaan, CT.
- ◆ The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is encouraged to make funding available for the Berkshire Line communities that are recommended to host initial passenger rail stations so the communities can engage in a detailed planning process to maximize the benefits of the proposed passenger rail station and minimize its impacts.
- ◆ All of the Berkshire Line communities are encouraged to stay involved in the

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Map 3: Recommended Station Locations



development of the proposed passenger rail service and to communicate concerns, if any, to BRPC, MassDOT and HRRRC.

- ◆ Each of the Berkshire Line communities may wish to consider establishing a “quiet zone” in their community if it is determined that the locomotive horn noise will create considerable noise impacts.
- ◆ In other localities where passenger rail services have been introduced, public authorities, rail carriers, federal and state safety officials and citizens have worked together with an organization called Operation Lifesaver to develop awareness and safety programs along the rail lines. During the time when construction is taking place to upgrade the tracks and construct stations, it is recommended that a similar program be instituted along the rail line in the Berkshires.

The following general recommendations pertain to the four (4) Berkshire Line communities recommended to host initial passenger rail stations. Specific recommendations can be found in the Station Area Plans for each proposed passenger rail station.

- ◆ Play an active role in the siting and construction of the passenger rail station. In particular, consider engaging the entity responsible for the design and construction of the proposed pas-

senger rail station to ensure the design is compatible with the community.

- ◆ Consider that a passenger rail station might be integrated into a mixed-use building instead of a standalone traditional platform and shelter. The mixed-use building could provide additional revenue to the passenger rail station owner from lease payments.
- ◆ Consider and plan for how the proposed passenger rail station can be an asset and gathering point for the community.
- ◆ Understand the capacity and condition of any public parking infrastructure and the proposed passenger rail stations impact on the parking. Develop a parking strategy to ensure that long term parking and short term parking are available in the passenger rail station area.
- ◆ Plan for additional mixed-use development around the proposed station area through amendments to the land use regulations to encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD), the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infill development.
- ◆ Understand the condition and capacity of utility infrastructure (sewer/water/gas/electricity) to support additional development around the proposed passenger rail station locations.
- ◆ Consider pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and ensure the surrounding

area provides safe access to the proposed passenger rail station for pedestrians and cyclists. Consider installing wayfinding signs to direct pedestrians from the passenger rail station to the downtown establishments

- ◆ Consider circulation patterns and traffic flow to ensure the surrounding areas do not become congested with traffic.

BRPC supports the development of the proposed passenger rail service because in our estimation, the projected benefits to the region’s economy and transportation system outweigh the anticipated localized impacts to a relatively small number of areas. This endorsement of the proposed passenger rail service is not intended to minimize those instances where impacts may occur. Our support for the proposed passenger rail service assumes that the operator of the passenger rail service will use best practices to prevent and mitigate those instances so that the quality of life of those people living in proximity to the rail corridor is not severely diminished.



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[None]	

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Passenger Rail Service in Berkshire County

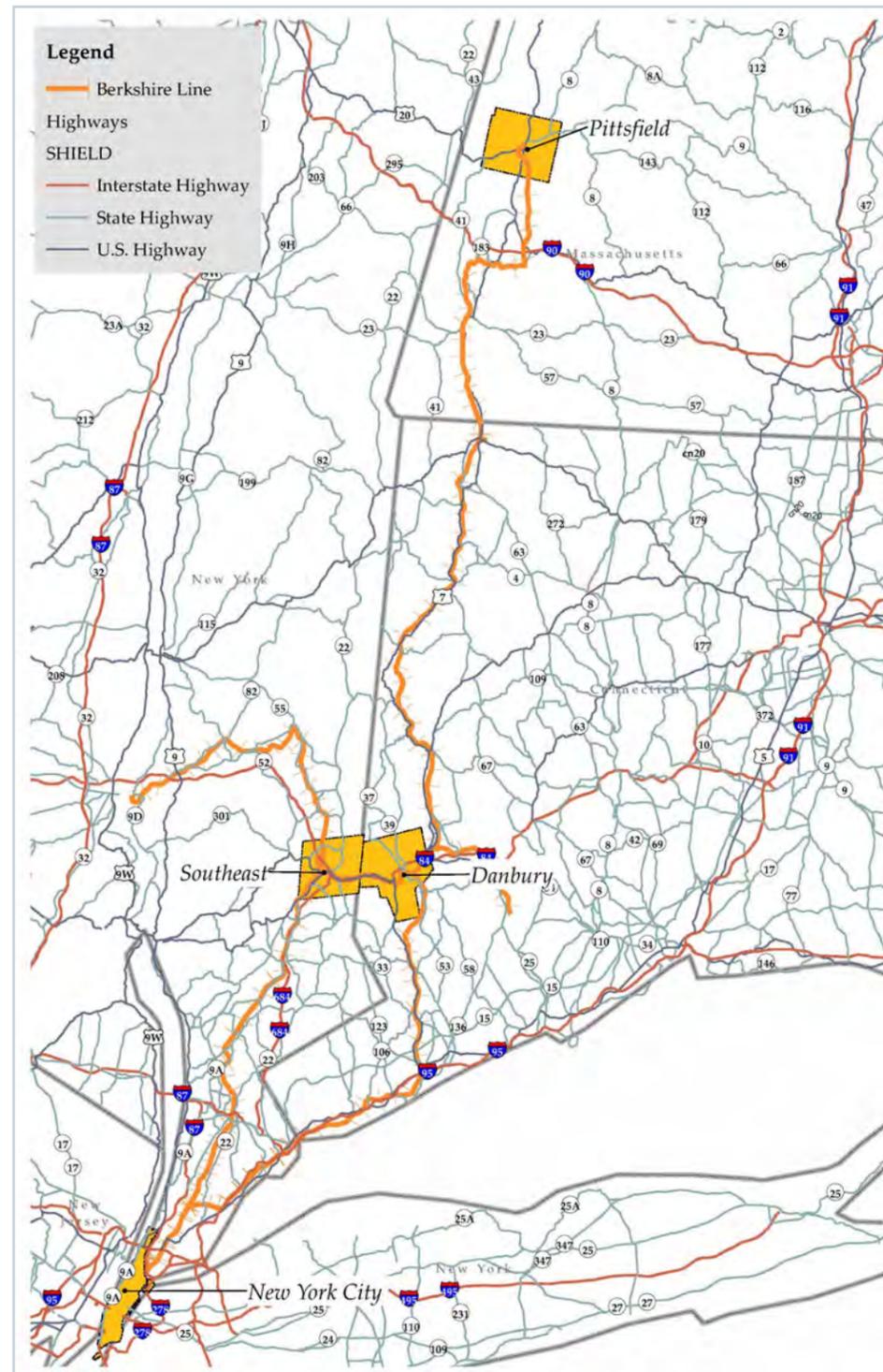
For nearly eighty (80) years the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company (“New Haven”) operated an active freight and passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Massachusetts and New York City. The train operated via Danbury, Connecticut to South Norwalk where passengers could connect directly into New York City. In 1969, the New Haven entered into a merger with the Penn Central Transportation Company, which shortly thereafter filed for bankruptcy. Penn Central’s bankruptcy filing marked the beginning of the end for north to south passenger rail service to Berkshire County. The last scheduled passenger train to Berkshire County operated in April 1971. Since that time, Berkshire County has been without direct north to south passenger rail service.

Amtrak currently provides limited east to west passenger rail service to Berkshire County along the Lake Shore Limited Line between Chicago and Boston. The Amtrak service to Berkshire County is far from robust with only two trains a day stopping at the Joseph A. Scelsi Intermodal Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Although this report is focused on the restoration of north to south passenger rail service to New York City, the enhancement of east to west passenger rail service to Boston is an equally important issue that warrants the attention of local, state and federal officials.

Proposal to Restore North to South Passenger Rail Service

HRRC has proposed operating a passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Massachusetts and New York City via Danbury, Connecticut. (See Map 1.1). The proposed service would connect to Metro North’s Harlem line at Metro North’s Southeast station for through trains to continue or for passengers to continue on the Metro North line into New York City. HRRC’s proposed passenger rail service would operate along the former New Haven right-of-way known as the Berkshire Line into Danbury, Connecticut and along a short section of the line known as the Maybrook Line to Southeast. HRRC’s proposed service along the Berkshire Line will require a significant capital investment to upgrade the deteriorated rail infrastructure and purchase equipment to operate a safe and efficient passenger rail service. Replacing the deteriorated track would also serve the existing and future freight railroad users along the line which is critical in supporting approximately 1,000 existing manufacturing jobs in the Berkshires and northwest Connecticut. HRRC has entered into separate discussions with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Commonwealth) and the State of Connecticut to explore the formation of a public-private partnership to determine how best to fund the needed infrastructure improvements. The Commonwealth has approved funding for a phase 1 construction program that would upgrade tracks to passenger rail standards. The availability of phase 2 funding is dependent on developing a plan for rail improvements in Connecticut. Improvements are also needed on the Maybrook Line in New York.

Map 1.1: Locus Map



Need for the Station Location and Design Analysis

Concerns over rising fuel prices and the potential environmental and societal consequences of increased greenhouse gas emissions have led the federal and many state governments, including Massachusetts to consider investing in rail infrastructure for both passenger and freight operations. The FY 2014–2018 Massachusetts Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) calls for the investment of \$35 million dollars to make initial infrastructure upgrades necessary to operate a freight and passenger rail service on the Berkshire Line. In accordance with the CIP, the recently enacted 2014 Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill allocates \$113.8 million dollars for infrastructure upgrades to the Berkshire Line.

The Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan (2012), the FY14 Unified Planning Work Program, Sustainable Berkshires Plan (2014), and the Berkshire County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2011) strongly support the resumption of passenger rail service along the Berkshire Line between Danbury, Connecticut and Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

◆ The **2014 Sustainable Berkshires Regional Plan** outlines a goal to “[d]evelop a transportation system that affords mobility for all, provides appropriate access to employment, housing, services and recreation areas, is

1. INTRODUCTION

protective of the environment, enhances community livability, and operates safely.” The resumption of the proposed passenger rail service supports this goal. More specifically, the Plan recommends that the transportation system meet critical regional economic development needs, by expanding freight and passenger rail service and upgrading the associated infrastructure.

- ◆ The Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) cited the development of a passenger rail station needs assessment as a key objective in their **Unified Planning Work Program** (October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014). The needs assessment would include “a refined operational analysis, facility amenities and design elements to improve transportation efficiency, reduce environmental impacts and spur economic development in a cost efficient manner.”
- ◆ In addition, the **2012 Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan** stresses the regional importance of reintroducing north-south passenger rail to the region: “This new passenger service is critical for the Berkshires because of the region’s strong ties to the greater metropolitan New York economy. Substantial improvements to the rail bed, acquisition of engines and coaches, and station establishments or upgrades are immediate requirements for beginning the north-south passenger service.”
- ◆ More specifically, the **2012 Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan** calls for the region to “[a]ssist the Housatonic Railroad Corporation to acquire funding to implement passenger rail service northward, from Danbury to Pittsfield” and to “[e]stablish facility and space needs for stations and parking areas along the north-

south Housatonic Railroad.”

- ◆ The **2011 Berkshire Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**, lists regional passenger rail improvements as a Priority Project for 2013 with the indication that the project meets one of the greatest regional needs. For communities and the region, the development of a passenger and expanded freight rail network could increase modes of transportation; thus improving access to the area. With increased access, there is the potential for greater economic investment.

The public, political and financial support for HRRC’s proposed service has grown pushing this “concept” of restoring passenger rail service to Berkshire County closer to realization.

HRRC’s proposed passenger rail service has many implications for Berkshire County that warrant further investigation. The proposed service will undoubtedly have both benefits and impacts to the region that need to be identified and understood. The Berkshire economy is becoming ever more dependent on tourism and service related jobs, thus finding an efficient and sustainable way to move people in and out of Berkshire County is an issue of great regional importance. Yet, the increased frequency of rail operations on the now infrequently used Berkshire Line will impact the residents of the six communities in new and different ways. This study is necessary to identify and quantify the benefits and impacts of the proposed service, to provide guidance to the decision makers as this proposed service becomes more fully developed and to help position the communities and the region to maximize the benefits of the proposed service and to avoid, mitigate and minimize any potential adverse impacts.

Study Objectives

The study is intended to meet all of the following objectives:

Primary Objective

- ◆ To identify the feasible and most advantageous locations for passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line and to better position municipalities to capture the benefits of the service while mitigating any potential adverse impacts.

Secondary Objectives

- ◆ To develop recommendations for passenger rail station designs, facilities and amenities
- ◆ To evaluate and refine the preliminary railroad operations analysis
- ◆ To assess the potential economic, environmental, land use and community benefits and impacts of the proposed passenger rail service and passenger rail station locations.

Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program Objectives

- ◆ To improve the efficiency of the transportation system of the United States
- ◆ To reduce environmental impacts of transportation
- ◆ To reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments
- ◆ To ensure the efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade
- ◆ To examine the community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns and investments that support these goals.

Contents of the Report

The report is divided into eleven (11) sections. A description of each section follows:

Section 1. Introduction.

Section 2. Study Area Descriptions. This section provides a description of Berkshire County and the six (6) Berkshire Line communities. This section also includes a discussion of the existing and historic passenger rail stations of the Berkshire Line.

Section 3. Existing Rail Corridor Conditions & Safety Upgrades. This section provides a description of the existing conditions of the rail infrastructure on the Berkshire Line, the necessary infrastructure and safety upgrades to operate the proposed service and the current operations of HRRC.

Section 4. Station Location Analysis. This section describes the objectives, methodology, evaluation criteria, and results of the passenger rail station location analysis.



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Section 5. Environmental Analysis of Target Areas & Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations. This section describes the methodology and results from an environmental analysis of the target areas and passenger rail station locations.

Section 6. Passenger Rail Station Sketch Plans & Ownership Considerations. This section provides conceptual site plans for select passenger rail station locations as well as designs for consideration. This section also provides information and recommendations on station ownership.

Section 7. Station Area Plans. This section consists of Station Area plans for select passenger rail station locations. The Station Area plans include a detailed analysis of the existing conditions around the proposed passenger rail station locations and provide recommendations for future development and public improvements.

Section 8. Ridership Forecasting & Preliminary Service Plan. This section discusses the preliminary ridership estimates developed by Market Street Research and the effort to refine these numbers to isolate ridership in Berkshire County. This section also includes a preliminary service plan and a discussion of ridership characteristics that may help shape the initial service plan.

Section 9. Anticipated Benefits & Impacts. This section provides a discussion of the anticipated benefits of the proposed service. This section also discusses the likely impacts of the proposed service and ways to mitigate those impacts.

Section 10. Public Participation. This section outlines the public process undertaken in the development of this report. This section also includes summaries of the public input received throughout the project.

Section 11. Considerations for Berkshire Line Communities. This section lays out considerations for Berkshire Line communities as the proposed service continues to be developed.

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2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Study Area Descriptions

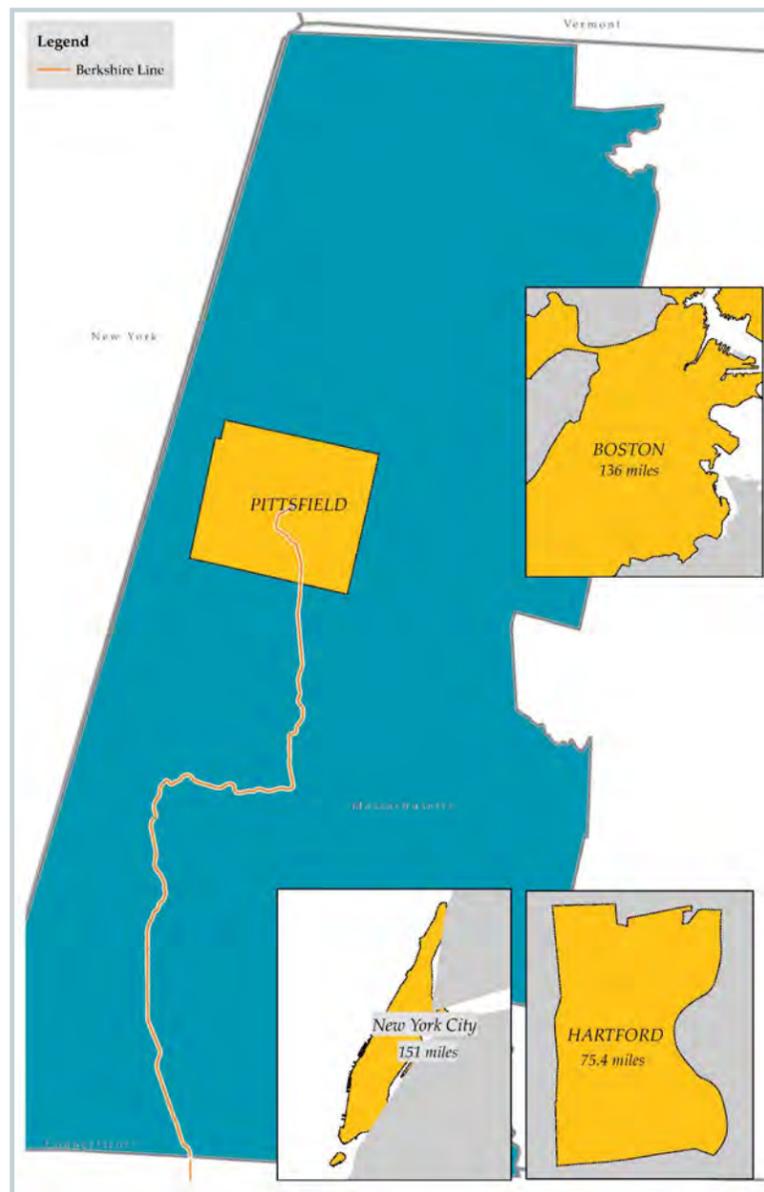
The proposed passenger rail service calls for the re-instatement of north-south passenger rail service to Berkshire County. The Berkshire Line passes through six (6) communities in Berkshire County between the Massachusetts/Connecticut state line

and its northern terminus located in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. This section includes a short description of Berkshire County and the six (6) Berkshire Line communities. This section also includes a discussion of the existing stations of the Berkshire Line and the opportunities and challenges that these stations, mostly historic, present for re-use as modern passenger rail stations.

through scenic valleys. Due to the steep topography and abundant water power much of the historic development in the region occurred in the valleys as the rivers provided a source of power to operate mills. The historic development patterns still exist today with much of the region's population located along the Housatonic or Hoosic Rivers.

oped. There are a number of at grade crossings in the town.

Map 2.1: Area Map



Berkshire County

Berkshire County is a mostly rural county located in the far western region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts bordered to the north by Vermont, to the west by New York, to the south by Connecticut and to the east by the Massachusetts counties of Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden.

Berkshire County is located approximately 2 ½ hours from Boston, Massachusetts and New York City. Berkshire County is the largest county in Massachusetts at 946 square miles of land, but is the fourth least populated with a U.S. Census Bureau 2013 population estimate of 129,585 people. The region consists of thirty-two municipalities (30 towns and 2 cities). The two most populous municipalities are the City of Pittsfield and the City of North Adams, with the Town of Great Barrington the fifth most populous. Just over 40% of the region's population is located in the City of Pittsfield and the City of North Adams.

The region's landscape is dominated by the Taconic Mountains to the west and the Berkshire Hills to the east with the Housatonic and Hoosic Rivers meandering

The Berkshire Line Communities

The Berkshire Line is a single track 86 mile railroad right-of-way that runs between Pittsfield, Massachusetts and Danbury, Connecticut. The Massachusetts portion of the Berkshire Line is approximately 38 miles long and runs between Sheffield, Massachusetts and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. (See map 2.2.)

Table 2.1: Berkshire Line Communities

Municipality	Population	Berkshire Line Passes Through the Town/City Center
Town of Sheffield	3,233	Yes
Town of Great Barrington	7,003	Yes
Town of Stockbridge	1,961	Yes
Town of Lee	5,898	Yes
Town of Lenox	5,000	No
City of Pittsfield	44,168	Yes

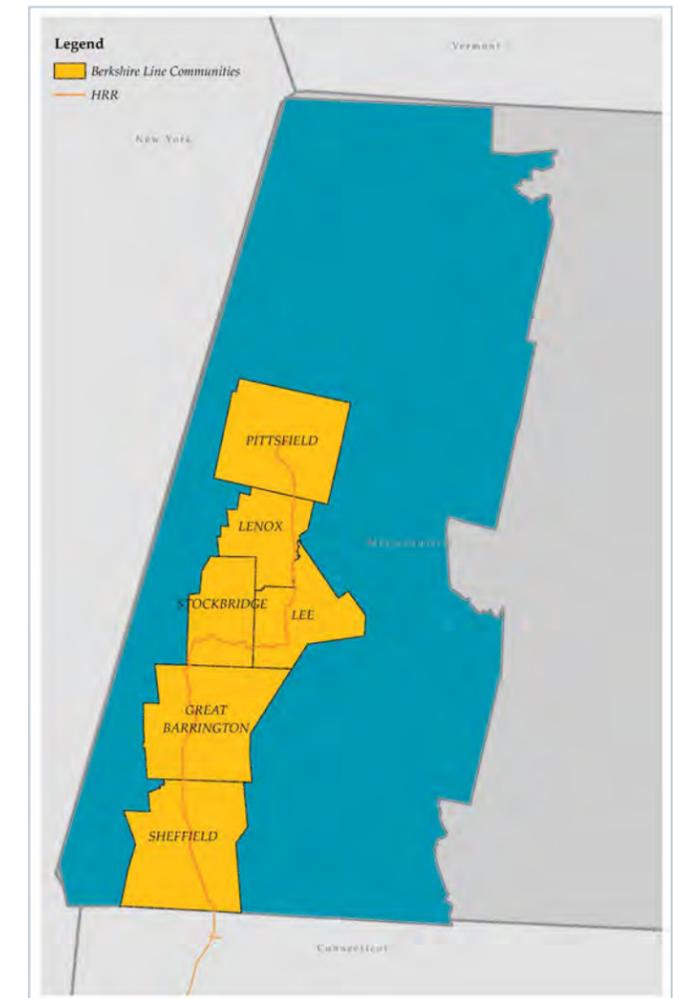
Source: U.S. Census ACS 2008-2012

The Berkshire Line passes through the following communities in Berkshire County:

Town of Sheffield – The right-of-way passes south to north parallel to Route 7 splitting the town nearly down the middle. The right-of-way passes through the rural village of Ashley Falls and through the center of Sheffield. Both Ashley Falls and Sheffield Center are not densely devel-

Town of Great Barrington – The right-of-way passes south to north following Route 7 and then Route 41. The right-of-way passes through the densely developed downtown center of Great Barrington and further north through the smaller Housatonic Village. Downtown Great Barrington is a vibrant mixed use downtown center with popular cultural attractions, restaurants and places of accommodation. Housatonic village is a small sce-

Map 2.2: Berkshire Line Communities



2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

nic village whose underutilized and vacant mill buildings present unique opportunities for redevelopment. Great Barrington serves as the primary center for southern Berkshire County.

Town of Stockbridge – The right-of-way passes mostly west to east through the Glendale section of town and then just south of the center of Stockbridge. The center of Stockbridge is a small mixed use town center with a number of restaurants, retail establishments, and places of accommodation.

Town of Lee – The right-of-way passes west to east in the southern part of Lee then runs northerly through the downtown area. The downtown area in Lee is a mixed use commercial – residential area with numerous restaurants, retail establishments, and places of accommodation. The right-of-way passes through several vacant and underutilized mill complexes located in the northern section of town.

Town of Lenox – The right-of-way runs south to north through the town passing through a small village known as Lenox Dale. The right-of-way does not pass through the more developed mixed use downtown area. A significant portion of the right-of-way passes through wetlands associated with the Housatonic River.

City of Pittsfield – The right-of-way passes south to north through suburban residential areas and it ends immediately south of the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center at a junction with a

right-of-way owned by CSX. The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center is an existing bus and passenger rail station in downtown Pittsfield.



Pittsfield's Beaux Art Union Station was demolished in 1968 as part of urban renewal. The station represents a type of station no longer present in Berkshire county: "with tall arched windows, green-veined marble walls, a high-domed terrazzo ceiling, skylight, chandeliers and polishing woodwork—a work for the ages".

Existing Stations of the Berkshire Line

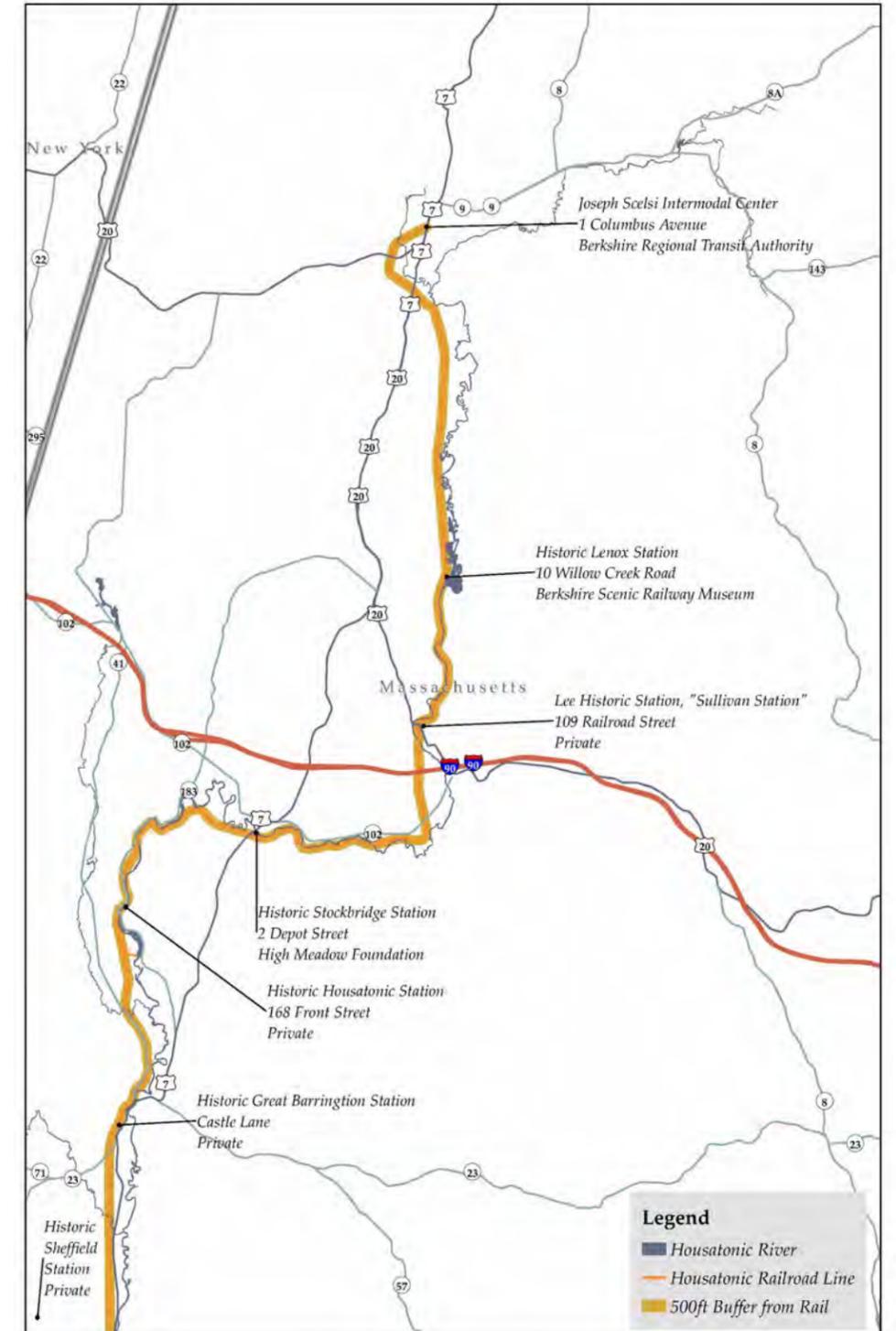
The Berkshire Line communities all hosted at least one passenger rail station when the New Haven operated passenger rail service; some of the communities, such as Great Barrington and Sheffield, had multiple passenger rail stations. In the years since passenger rail service ended in the Berkshires, the historic stations have met varied fates. Some stations have been preserved and put to different uses, others demolished and still yet another picked-up and moved away from the railroad right-of-way. In Pittsfield, the historic station was demolished in 1968. In Sheffield, the historic station was moved away from the railroad right-of-way and is now used as a residence. The historic stations in

Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee and Lenox have been preserved and put to a variety of uses such as an office, a restaurant and a museum. In Pittsfield, the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center is a new intermodal transportation center that opened in 2004 on the CSX line just north of the junction of the CSX and HRRC railroad rights-of-way.

In summary, each community has an existing passenger rail station historic or otherwise (see map 2.3), except for the Town of Sheffield, which if located in the appropriate locations could be investigated further to determine if the building could be converted back for use as a passenger rail station.

Other communities have successfully retrofitted historic stations to suit the operational requirements of contemporary passenger rail service. The retrofitting of an existing historic train station is a concept worth considering in situations only where the location and reuse of the building are beneficial to the community, the region, and the operation of the proposed passenger rail service. The purpose of the following section is to identify the existing station buildings and parcel characteristics and to identify the opportunities and challenges to the reuse of the sites for contemporary passenger rail service. However, whether an historic building or structure can be gainfully used as a contemporary passenger rail station is outside the scope of this study. Such feasibility can be explored in greater depth as part of a separate study effort.

Map 2.3: Existing Stations

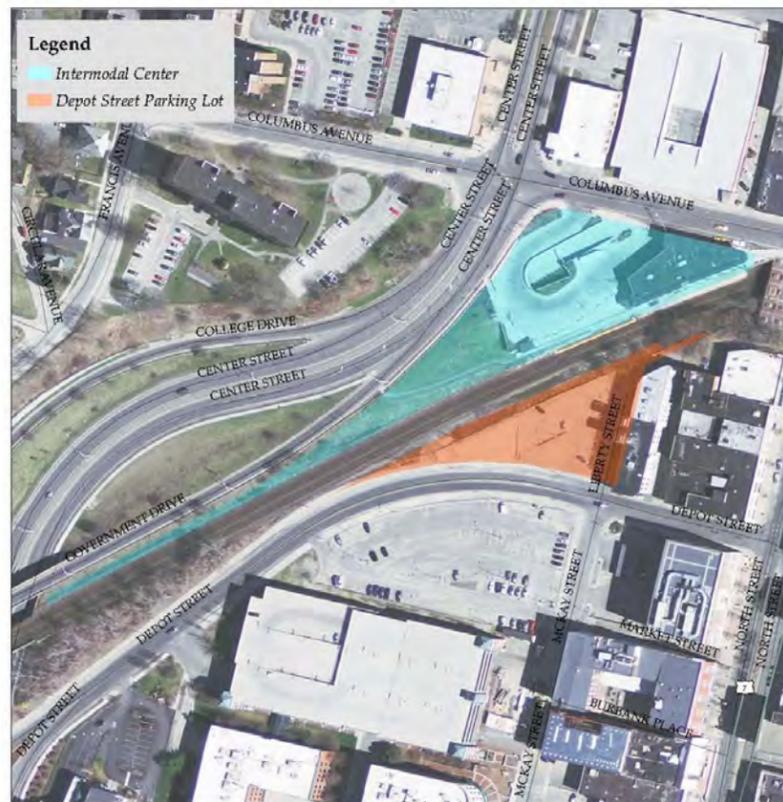


2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Existing Passenger Rail Stations

Pittsfield: Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center			
Owner	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Train and bus depot	<p>The Intermodal Center is a nexus of public transportation services and is served by both local and intercity bus service. It is also served by intercity east to west passenger rail service via Amtrak. Its location offers immediate pedestrian access to the commercial and cultural center of Pittsfield. Off-site public parking is available in close proximity.</p>	<p>Due to capacity issues on the CSX line, HRRC would need to construct a new rail siding on the south side of the CSX right-of-way. An elevated pedestrian walkway would need to be constructed to connect the new platform to the existing building. There is very little on-site parking available.</p>
Historic Designation	None		
Year Opened	2004		
Lot Size	1.73 acres		
Building Condition	Good		
Address	1 Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201		

Lenox: Historic Station			
Owner	Private – Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Museum	<p>The existing structure could serve to shelter passengers from the elements and house ticket kiosks.</p>	<p>The station currently operates as a railroad museum. The owners have expressed their preference that the station remains as a museum. The station is located approximately two (2) miles from downtown Lenox and does not have good connectivity with the rest of the town. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements.</p>
Historic Designation	National Register of Historic Places		
Year Built	1902-1903		
Lot Size	4.05 acres		
Building Condition	Restored - Good		
Address	10 Willow Creek Road Lenox, MA 01240		



Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Center
Address: 1 Columbus Avenue
Ownership: Berkshire Regional Transit Authority



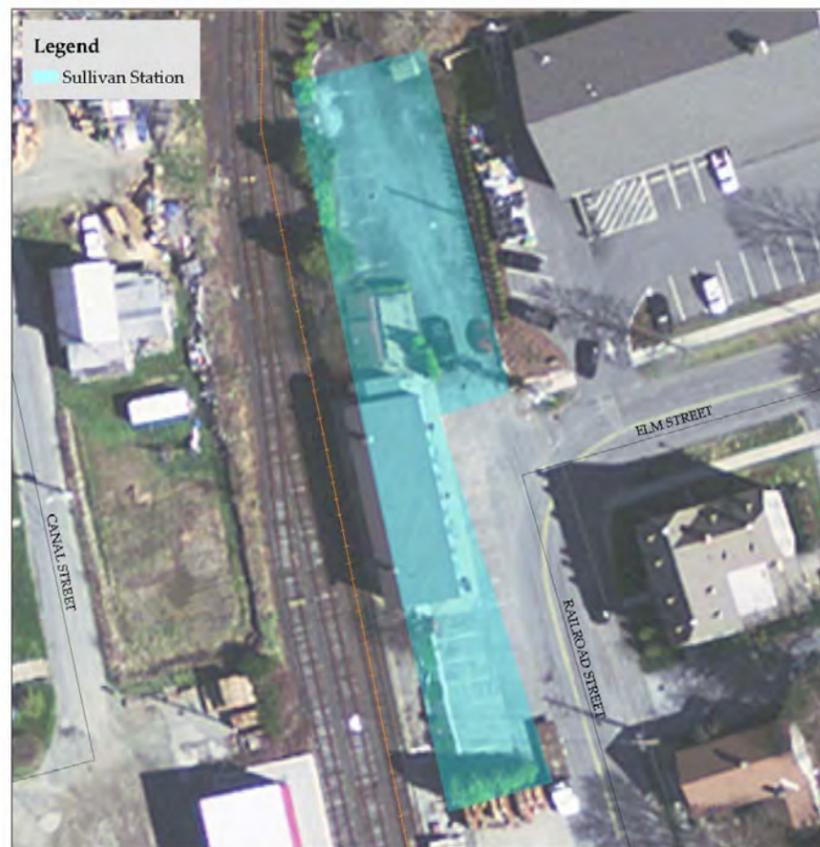
Historic Lenox Station
Address: 10 Willow Creek Road
Ownership: Private, Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum



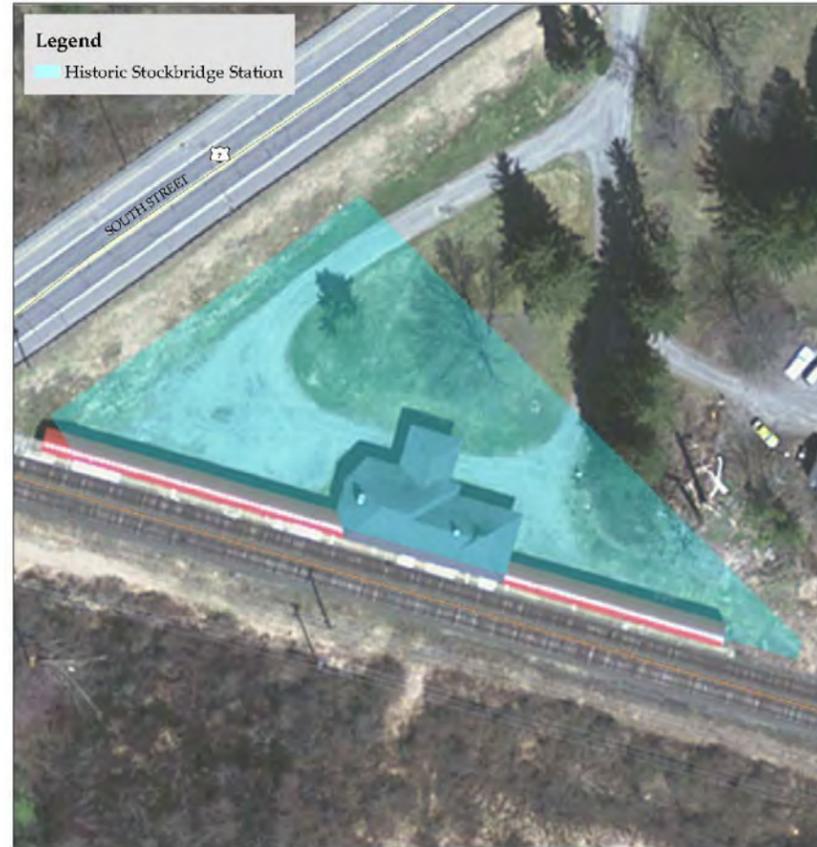
2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Lee: Sullivan Station			
Owner	Private – Individual	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Restaurant	<p>The existing structure could serve to shelter passengers from the elements and house ticket kiosks. The location in the heart of downtown has the potential to spur additional economic activity.</p>	<p>The station is currently being used as a restaurant. The lot size is only 0.28 acres and there is very little space for expansion on adjacent lots. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements. Parking is extremely limited.</p>
Historic Designation	National Register of Historic Places		
Year Built	1893		
Lot Size	0.28 acres		
Building Condition	Restored – Good		
Address	109 Railroad Street Lee, MA 01238		

Stockbridge: Historic Station			
Owner	Private – High Meadow Foundation	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Museum	<p>HRRC owns land adjacent to the historic station site that if combined could provide adequate space for parking. The existing structure could serve to shelter passengers from the elements and house ticket kiosks.</p>	<p>The station is currently leased and used as museum and community room. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements. This location is approximately three-tenths of a mile from the downtown area so pedestrian connectivity to the downtown area is not ideal.</p>
Historic Designation	Unknown		
Year Built	1893		
Lot Size	0.88 acres		
Building Condition	Restored - Good		
Address	2 Depot Street Stockbridge, MA 01262		



Lee Historic Station, "Sullivan Station"
Address: 109 Railroad Street
Ownership: Private



Historic Stockbridge Station
Address: 168 Front Street
Ownership: Private, High Meadow Foundation

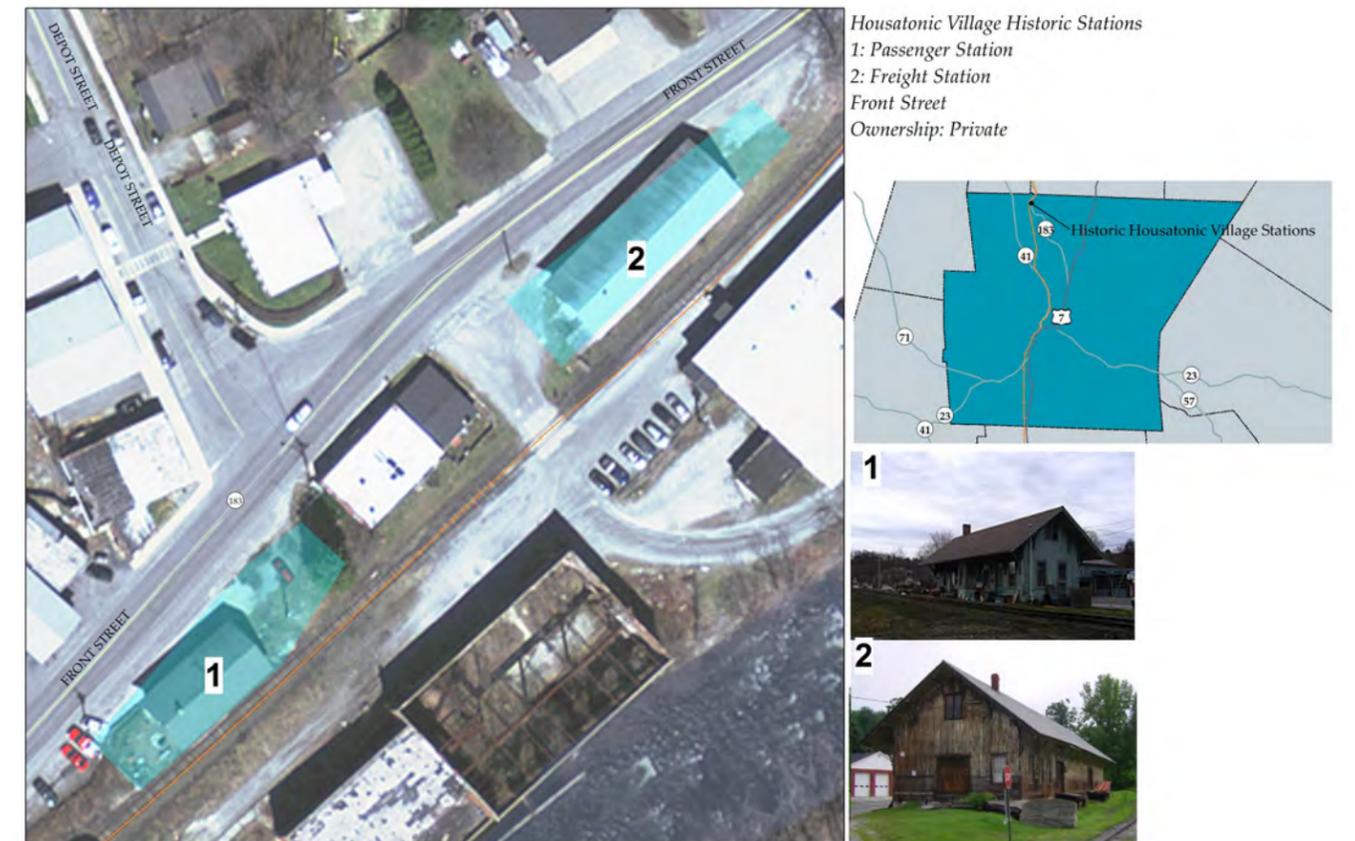


2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Housatonic: Former Freight Station			
Owner	Private – Individual	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Vacant	<i>The existing structure could serve to shelter passenger from the elements and house ticket kiosks. The building is approximately 6,900 square feet.</i>	<i>Housatonic Village is located approximately five (5) miles north of downtown Great Barrington and does not provide good connectivity to the downtown area. The small lot creates parking challenges. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements.</i>
Historic Designation	None		
Year Built	1900		
Lot Size	0.15 acres		
Building Condition	Unknown		
Address	0 Front Street Great Barrington, MA 01230		

Housatonic: Former Passenger Station			
Owner	Private – Individual	Opportunities	Challenges
Current Use	Recording studio	<i>The existing structure could serve to shelter passengers from the elements and house ticket kiosks. The building is approximately 6,300 square feet.</i>	<i>Housatonic Village is located approximately five (5) miles north of downtown Great Barrington and does not provide good connectivity to the downtown area. The small lot creates parking challenges. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements.</i>
Historic Designation	None		
Year Built	1900		
Lot Size	0.16 acres		
Building Condition	Unknown		
Address	168 Front Street Great Barrington, MA 01230		

Historically, Great Barrington had two passenger rail stations and a rail depot. The two passenger stations were located in Downtown Great Barrington and Housatonic Village. The rail depot was in Van Deusenville. The Downtown Great Barrington station still exists, as does the former passenger station and freight station in Housatonic village. All of the existing historic stations are privately owned and they may or may not be available for railroad station development.



2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

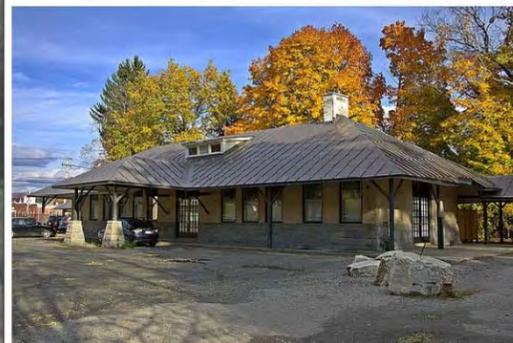
Downtown Great Barrington: Historic Station		Opportunities	Challenges
Owner	Private -- Alder Creek LLC	<i>The existing station site offers direct access to downtown Great Barrington, including the Mahaiwe Theater, boutiques and restaurants. The current owner of the station owns adjacent parcels that might be used for additional parking and to improve traffic flow. The existing structure could serve to shelter passengers from the elements and house ticket kiosks.</i>	<i>The location is relatively constrained by existing development, making configuring sufficient parking a challenge. This location would require the construction of a new high level platform and retrofitted to incorporate ADA accessibility requirements.</i>
Current Use	Commercial		
Historic Designation	None		
Year Built	1938		
Lot Size	1.25 acres		
Building Condition	Restored - Good		
Address	Castle Street Great Barrington, MA 01230		

Sheffield once had two train stations. One station located in Ashley Falls, formerly located at the intersection of School Street and Route 7, burned to the ground and was never rebuilt. The station formerly located in the town center, near the existing town hall, has been relocated and is currently used as a residence.

Sheffield: Historic Station			
		Opportunities	Challenges
Owner	Private	N/A	<i>The station has been relocated out of the right-of way and is currently used as a private residence.</i>
Current Use	Residence		



Historic Great Barrington Station
Castle Lane
Private



Summary

Of the existing and historic stations, the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center presents the best opportunity for using an existing station for the proposed passenger rail service. The historic stations in the Towns of Lee and Great Barrington are located in the heart of downtown areas and the potential exists for these passenger rail station sites to help revitalize those areas. The main challenges with the reuse of the historic stations in these locations are the small lot size and non-ADA compliant buildings. The historic station site in Stockbridge presents an opportunity for reuse because of its location near the downtown area and the potential for an adjacent lot to be used for additional parking; however the building would need to be modified to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The historic station in the Town of Lenox is not located in the downtown area and its owner has expressed its interest that the historic station, currently a museum, not be considered for re-use. Lastly, the historic station in Sheffield which has been moved off the rail corridor is not considered a viable option. With the historic stations and the rail infrastructure nearly a century old, a significant capital investment will need to be made to update both the rail infrastructure (described in Section 3) and any historic stations selected for re-use as a contemporary passenger rail station.



3. EXISTING RAIL CORRIDOR CONDITIONS AND SAFETY UPGRADES

Berkshire Line Existing Conditions and Anticipated Track & Infrastructure Upgrades

HRRC provided the information for this section based upon its intimate knowledge of the conditions of the Berkshire Line over which it operates a freight railroad service

Berkshire Line Existing Conditions

The Berkshire Line runs from Danbury Connecticut (Mile Post 0.0) to Pittsfield, Massachusetts (Mile Post 86.3) where the line intersects with the CSX main line generally known as the Boston and Albany. The distance from Danbury to the Massachusetts state line is 50 miles and from the Massachusetts/Connecticut border at Milepost 50, the line extends north 36.3 miles through the Massachusetts towns of Sheffield, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee and Lenox to the City of Pittsfield. The rail

line is generally single track, meaning that trains operate north and south on the same rails under the control of a dispatcher. At several locations along the rail line there are passing sidings which provide space, if necessary, for northbound and southbound trains to pass each other.

While the entire Berkshire Line is owned or controlled by the Housatonic Railroad pending acquisition by MassDOT for the Massachusetts portion, it was assembled by HRRC through leases or purchases from multiple railroads. Prior to Housatonic's ownership the portion in Massachusetts was owned by what is now Pan Am Southern. The middle section, between Canaan, Connecticut and New Milford, Connecticut in the early 1970's was owned by the bankrupt Penn Central System and ultimately abandoned by them and subsequently purchased

by the State of Connecticut. This middle portion was unused for a number of years until it was leased by HRRC when it reactivated rail service. The southern portion of the line was purchased by HRRC from the now defunct Conrail railroad. Prior to being purchased or leased by HRRC, significant portions of the line had not received any significant maintenance for many years. HRRC not only restored service over the entire Berkshire Line, but over the years has invested in the property, upgraded tracks and facilities and continually improved the property.

The Berkshire Line is somewhat unique in that it is one of the few lines in Massachusetts that is maintained to carry rail cars that have gross weights of 286,000 lbs and it is also maintained to carry high and wide loads. Most other lines in Massachusetts are limited to a maximum of 263,000 lbs and all other lines in Connecticut are limited to 263,000 lbs. Thus, the line is strategically important to the region because it provides access for the occasional oversized load such as large transformers. It also permits customers to benefit from heavier payloads reducing their cost per ton of material for shipments. Today, the railroad serves approximately 20 consignees in Massachusetts and Connecticut, some of whom are the largest employers and property tax payers in the region.

While in recent times the rail line had multiple owners, the line for many years was owned by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad and like other older New Haven Lines the rail was manufactured in the early 1920's using open hearth technology meaning the rail was not controlled cooled making it increasingly brittle as it ages. It is known as 107 lb rail which refers to the weight per yard of rail. It has served the line well for approximately 90 years, but it has reached the end of its useful life and in Massachusetts, is scheduled for replacement under a recently announced agreement between HRRC and the Commonwealth. In Massachusetts, the 107 lb rail is generally located between the Massachusetts/Connecticut state line and Lee/Lenox. The very northern section of the railroad contains 6 miles of slightly newer and heavier weight 112 lb rail and a short 1.5 mile section of modern 136 lb rail (See Map 3.1). While the 112 lb rail remains serviceable, it will need to be replaced in order to efficiently and safely accommodate the higher speed passenger trains that are being planned for on this rail line. The entire railroad is tied with wood ties and the use of wood ties will continue in the future.

In recent years the railroad has experienced a number of rail failures primarily due to the age of the rail and to the method used for manufacturing the rail. In order to protect the rail service, HRRC conducts frequent visual inspec-

tions of its tracks, a methodology required by federal law and regulation. In addition, while not required by law or regulation, HRRC also employs an electronic inspection procedure working with two companies who are located on the system. Periodically, specialized equipment is operated over portions of the railroad with sensors that can detect flaws that are not visible to the naked eye. Using electronic and visual inspection, HRRC has continuously inspected the rail on its system and this practice will continue into the future. While this inspection approach is effective at finding rail flaws before they become an issue, replacement of the rail with a new modern rail section throughout the corridor is the best long term solution. The existing track is not capable of being used for passenger rail service.

Anticipated Track & Infrastructure Upgrades

To achieve the aforementioned upgrades, HRRC working with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and with the State of Connecticut, has embarked on a comprehensive program to replace rail in both states. As previously mentioned, the railroad is in the process of executing an agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under which nearly all of the rail on the Berkshire Line will be replaced within the next two years.

Specifically, HRRC and MassDOT anticipate executing agreements that will

Phase	Improvements	Cost
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of the 107 lb jointed rail with 136 lb welded rail; Replacement of ties; and Bridge and culvert inspections and ratings 	\$35 million
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of the remaining 112 lb jointed rail with 136 lb welded rail; Replacement of ties; Construction of passing sidings; Bridge and culvert repairs; Install crossing and signal system; Construct stations and parking; and Acquire rolling stock 	\$78.8 million
TOTAL		\$113.8 million

* Cost estimates and improvements are subject to change to as the project continues to develop.



3. EXISTING RAIL CORRIDOR CONDITIONS AND SAFETY UPGRADES

provide for a Phase 1 rehabilitation of the entire 36.3 miles of rail line between the Connecticut state line and Pittsfield. Work will vary by location as some areas have received more investment over the years than others. It is expected that the Phase 1 project will include the installation of approximately 50,000 new ties and the replacement of 30 miles of rail, all of which is the older 107 lb rail referenced above. The actual number of ties per mile will vary based on inspection with the heavier tie installation focused on the areas where welded rail will be installed. The new rail that will be installed will be 136 lb, 6 inch base welded rail that will meet passenger rail standards. In Connecticut, HRRC will be replacing approximately 6 miles of rail in the very near future and expects to continue that process into the foreseeable future. HRRC will also continue its ongoing aggressive rail inspection program to protect the safety of the railroad and the public.

In addition to replacing rail and ties, the Phase 1 project will address a number of roadway grade crossings. Historically, when HRRC has renewed roadway grade crossings, the old rail and ties in the crossing were removed and replaced with new ties and 136 lb welded rail. That policy will prove beneficial as those crossings which have been previously rehabilitated will not need to be redone, saving money and permitting HRRC to focus on other crossings in need of upgrades. As new track is installed, crossings that have not been improved with welded rail will be opened and new rail will be installed. At the same time, new crossing surfaces will be installed benefiting roadway users. The Berkshire Line in Massachusetts contains a total of 51 crossings, 19 of which are private. Thirty-five (35) of the 51 crossings will be rebuilt and will receive new crossing surfaces. All public crossings will require active

warning devices including lights and gates when passenger service is implemented. The majority of this work will take place during Phase 2 of the improvement project.

The first phase of the rehabilitation project will also include the inspection of bridges and culverts, including rating the bridges. The rail line in Massachusetts contains 30 bridges including wood structures, steel bridges and several masonry structures. While nearly all of the bridges will receive some attention prior to the initiation of passenger service, it is anticipated that most of the existing structures will remain in service. Some of the smaller bridges, particularly older wooden ones, can and will be eliminated and replaced with precast concrete culverts. Others will be replaced with more modern structures suitable for higher speed passenger services. While some funding will be budgeted in the first phase for bridge work, the actual level of work cannot be determined until a structural inspection is completed on each bridge. This structural assessment work will be completed early in the process so that bridge work can be prioritized. While some older, particularly wooden, bridges will be replaced, work on bridges is and will continue to be an ongoing process. Generally, it is good practice to replace older bridge decks with ballasted decks that improve the efficiencies of track maintenance. Work will include deck replacement, replacing of bridge seats and painting. All bridges will continue to be prioritized based on engineering inspections so that work is programmed to address identified deficiencies.

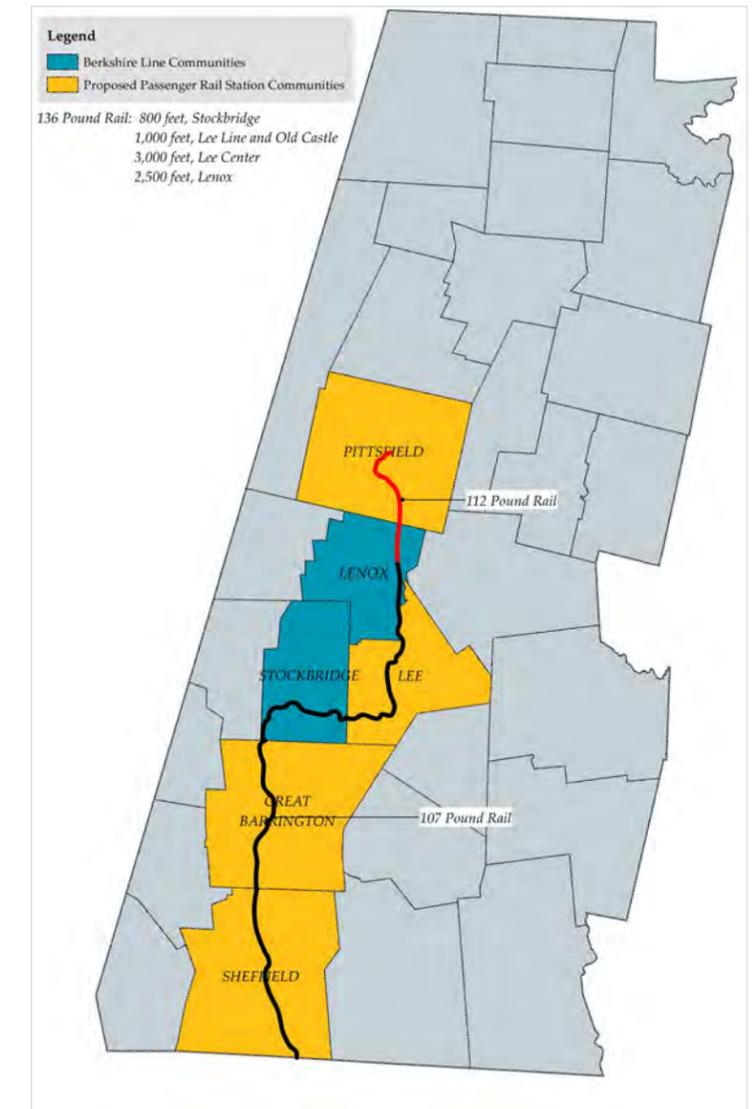
The Phase I improvements, in addition to facilitating the reintroduction of passenger rail service, will also have positive impacts for the existing freight service and on the economic competitive-

ness of the region. The improvements will ensure that freight can be safely shipped into and out of the region, even the oversized 286,000 lb rail cars. The improvements also support the existing companies that rely on the freight service and who provide jobs to approximately 800 Berkshire County residents.

As for Phase II of the project, the legislature approved an additional \$78.8 million dollars for additional improvements. Phase II improvements will likely include additional rail and tie replacements, passing sidings, bridge work, crossing and signals, station facilities, parking and rolling stock. MassDOT has indicated that the Phase II investment is conditioned on similar improvements being made to the CT portion of the rail corridor.

A key factor for the Berkshire Line, both in Massachusetts and Connecticut, is the geography of the region. Housatonic Railroad operates through the Berkshires and the Litchfield Hills and for many miles runs adjacent to the Housatonic River. There is little straight or tangent track between Danbury and Pittsfield. In Massachusetts, there are some straighter sections in the Sheffield area and over a small portion of the railroad between Lenox and Pittsfield. Because of the geography and extensive curvature along the railroad, speeds for future passenger services will generally be restricted to 59 MPH or less. However, with prudent placement of stations, upgraded rails and ties, diligent maintenance and the introduction of high level platforms that make boarding and exiting trains faster and safer, average speeds along the line can be maintained at a very competitive level.

Map 3.1: Existing Rail by Weight Per Yard



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Objective

The objective of the station location analysis is to identify the feasible and most advantageous locations for passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line. The ideal passenger rail station locations will meet the needs of the local community, the needs of the region and the needs of the proposed passenger rail service.

Methodology

The methodology developed and applied in this analysis consists of a four-tiered site screening process in order to identify feasible and advantageous sites for the construction of passenger rail stations. With guidance from the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles (see Table 4.1 at right), Sustainable Berkshires (BRPC’s Regional Plan for Berkshire County), principles of smart growth (see Table 4.2 at right), best professional planning practices, and with input from local officials and the public, project staff developed evaluation criteria for each tier of the screening process.

- ◆ **Tier 1 Objective:** To identify developable land immediately adjacent to the rail corridor and group such land into target areas excluding such land that is not developable from further consideration.
- ◆ **Tier 2 Objective:** (Local Needs) To conduct a comparative analysis of the target areas in each community to identify which target areas would provide the greatest benefits to the community with the least adverse impacts if a passenger rail station were constructed.
- ◆ **Tier 3 Objective:** (Regional and Operational Needs) To identify which of the target areas meet regional needs and certain operational needs for the passenger rail service to operate efficiently.

Table 4.1: Massachusetts Sustainable Development Principles

1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses	2. Advance Equity
3. Make Efficient Decisions	4. Protect Land and Ecosystems
5. Use Natural Resources Wisely	6. Expand Housing Opportunities
7. Provide Transportation Choices	8. Increase Job and Business Opportunities
9. Promote Clean Energy	10. Plan Regionally

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Table 4.2: Principles of Smart Growth

1. Mix land uses	2. Take advantage of compact building design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices	4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place	6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities	8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective	10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

- ◆ **Tier 4 Objective:** To develop recommendations as to the preferred and alternative sites for initial passenger rail stations in the Berkshire Line communities.

Focused Study Area for this Analysis

The station platform and other amenities must be located immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks. Thus, for the purposes of this analysis the study area is defined as all land within five hundred (500) feet on each side of the Berkshire Line rail corridor from the Massachusetts – Connecticut state line to the junction of the HRRC and CSX rail corridors and further north along the CSX rail cor-

ridor to the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center. The study area includes a total of 4,445 acres of land in the six Berkshire Line communities along thirty-eight (38) miles of railroad track.

Tier 1 – Identification of Developable Land in the Study Area

The objective of Tier 1 is to identify developable land immediately adjacent to the rail corridor and group such land into target areas excluding such land that is not developable from further consideration. An area of land is considered not developable if it meets one of the criteria identified in Table 4.3 below. A GIS analysis was conducted using the

state GIS database to map the selected criteria in the study area.

Table 4.3: Tier I Evaluation Criteria

Wetland Resource Areas
Steep Slopes Greater than 15%
Permanently Protected Open Space
Lack of Physical Access to the Rail Corridor

Rationale for Tier I Evaluation Criteria

Wetland Resource Areas. The construction of a passenger rail station in a wetland resource area is difficult, environmentally disruptive and creates significant project costs. Wetland resource areas serve important functions such as protecting water quality, retaining floodwater and providing important habitat for aquatic and other wildlife species. Although certain railroad activities may be exempt from state wetland protection laws, the important functions that wetland resource areas serve and the availability of alternative locations makes a wetland resource area an inappropriate location for a passenger rail station.

Steep Slopes Greater than 15%. The construction of a passenger rail station on steep slopes over 15% is difficult and creates significant project costs. Environmental concerns such as drainage, slope stabilization, and cut and fill associated with development on steep slopes and the availability of alternative locations makes a steep slope over 15% an inappropriate location for a passenger rail station.

Permanently Protected Open Space. Permanently protected open space land is prevented from development through a deed restriction, legislative protection, or similar legal mechanism and is thus not developable (e.g. land subject to a conservation

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

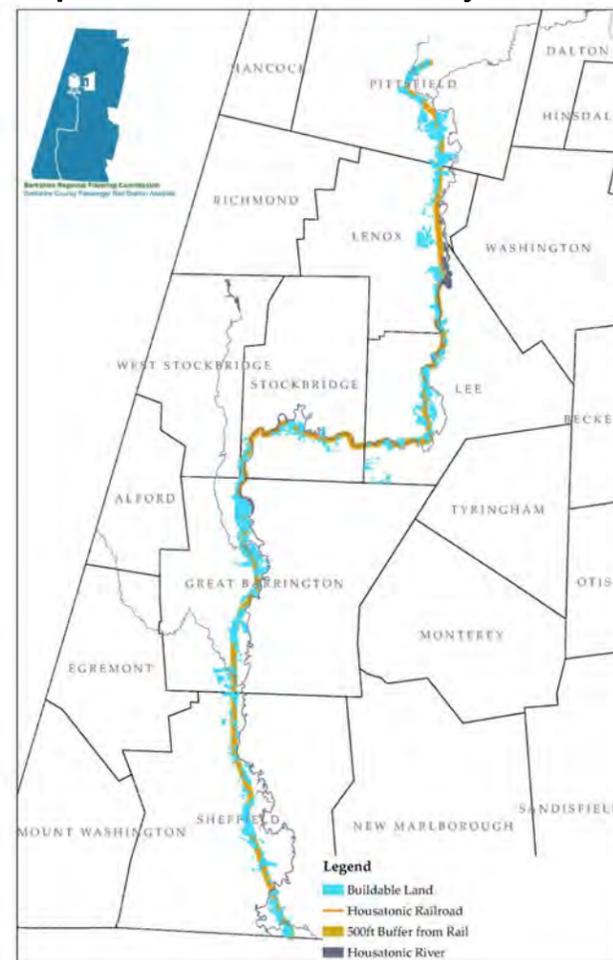
restriction, Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, or an Agricultural Preservation Restriction).

Lack of Physical Access to the Rail Corridor. Areas of land within the study area with no direct physical access to the rail corridor are excluded from further consideration in this study because constructing a platform adjacent to the railroad tracks is impossible (e.g. the railroad tracks are located on the opposite side of the Housatonic River).

Results of Tier 1 Screening Process

After applying the evaluation criteria identified above the study area contains 1,885 acres of developable land to be considered as potential locations for passenger rail stations. (See Map 4.1.) The remaining 2,560 acres of land identified as undevelopable are excluded from further consideration in this screening process.

Map 4.1: Buildable Land in Study Area



As expected, wetland resource areas are the most common natural feature in the study area (See Table 4.4.) as the Berkshire Line follows the Housatonic River closely from Stockbridge, Massachusetts north to Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

As expected, wetland resource areas are the most common natural feature in the study area (See Table 4.4.) as the Berkshire Line follows the Housatonic River closely from Stockbridge, Massachusetts north to Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Table 4.4: Acreage of Developable Land in the Study Area

Developable Land	1,885 acres
Undevelopable Land	2,560 acres

Table 4.5: Characteristics of the Study Area

Wetland Resource Areas	2,018 acres
Steep Slopes over 15%	529 acres
Permanently Protected Open Space	747 acres
Lack of Physical Access to the Rail Corridor	> 50 acres

Identification of Preliminary Target Areas

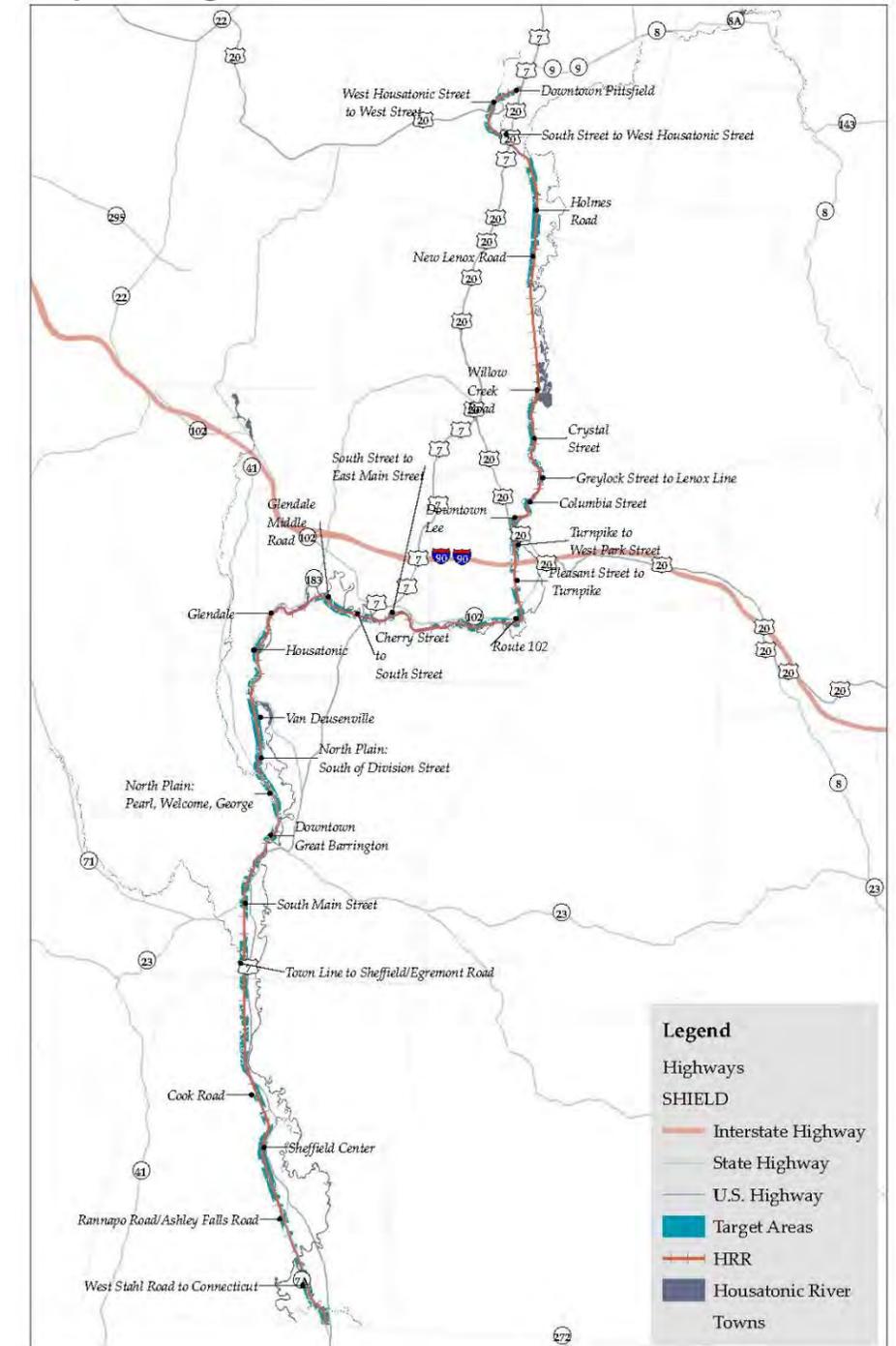
The 1,885 acres of developable land identified above were grouped in target areas. Adjacent developable land in each municipality was grouped together into preliminary target areas to facilitate the discussion of the developable land. This process resulted in the identification of the twenty-eight (28) target areas. (See Map 4.2.)

Tier 2 – Local Needs and Target Areas

The Tier 1 screening process resulted in the identification of twenty-eight (28) target areas for further consideration as possible locations for passenger rail stations. One important consideration in selecting the location of passenger rail stations is whether a location meets the local needs of the community. With guidance from the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles, principles of smart growth, input from local officials and public input, evaluation criteria were developed in an attempt to identify local needs. The objective of Tier 2 is to conduct a comparative analysis of the target areas in each community in order to identify which target areas would provide the greatest benefits to the community with the least adverse impacts if a passenger rail station were constructed.

To complete the comparative analysis, a series of detailed questions were developed for each criterion to help determine the effect or impact that a passenger rail station would have if located in each one of the twenty-eight (28) target areas.

Map 4.2: Target Areas





4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Table 4.6: Tier 2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria for Local Needs	Supports Sustainable Development Principles	Supports Smart Growth Principles
1. Will the use of the Target Area as a passenger rail station maximize the economic benefits to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?	1,4,6,8	1,3,4,5,6,7
2. Will the use of the Target Area as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?	2,6,7	3,4,8
3. Will the use of the Target Area as a passenger rail station complement community development efforts?	3	5
4. Will the use of the Target Area as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?	1	1,5
5. Will the use of the Target Area as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	4,5	6

Please see Appendix A for the completed evaluations of each target area by community.

Criterion 1. Will the use of the Target Area (TA) as a passenger rail station maximize the economic benefits to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?

1. Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?
2. Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?
3. Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?
4. Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?

Criterion 2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?

1. Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?
2. Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?
3. Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?
4. Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?
5. Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate intra-county transportation for residents and visitors?

Criterion 3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community development efforts?

1. Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents?

Criterion 4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?

1. Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?

Criterion 5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?

1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?

Results of the Tier 2 Screening Process for Local Needs

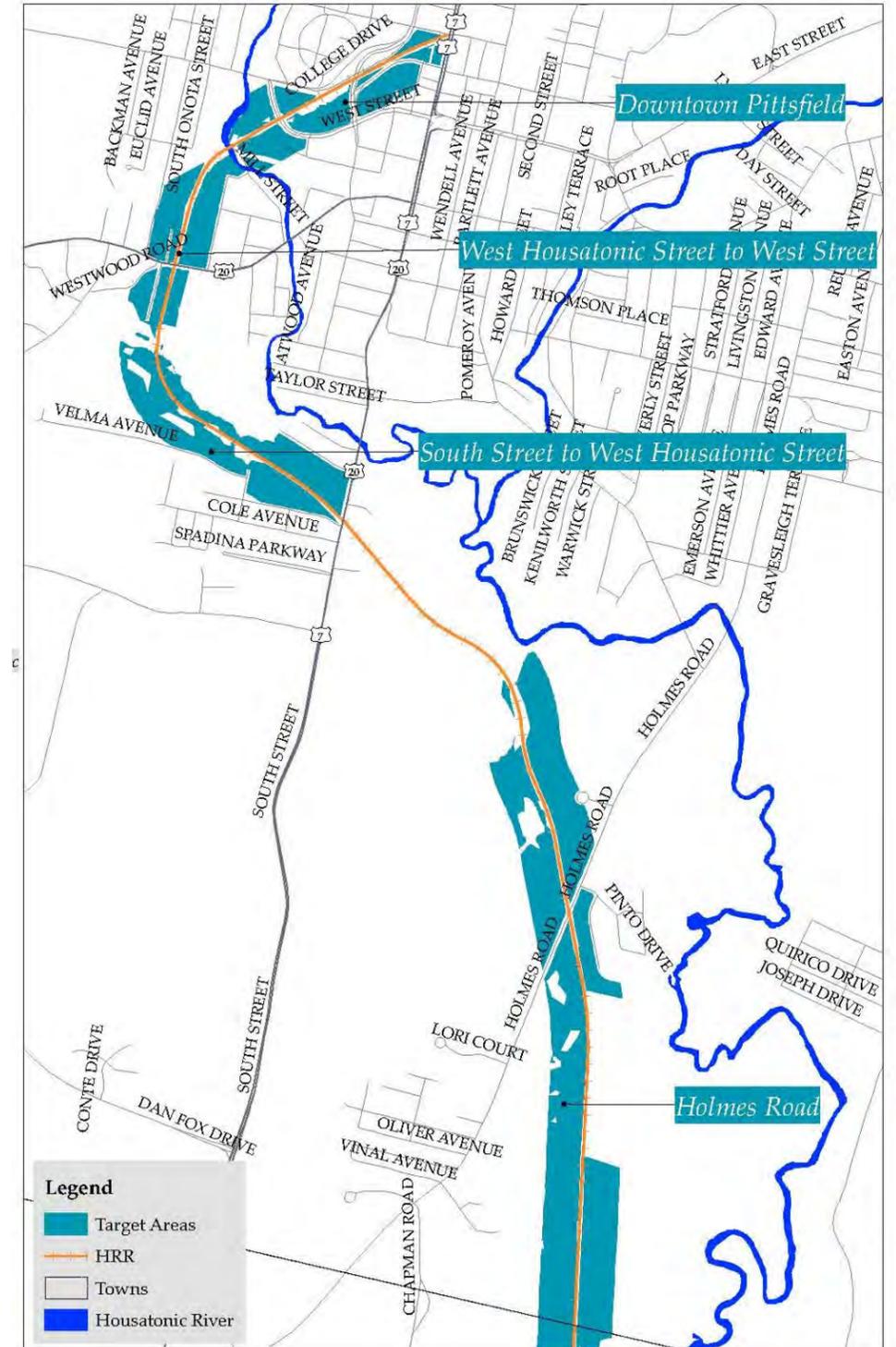
The target area rankings by community are intended to be used a general guide for where a passenger rail station would be most beneficial to the community; however, in determining ideal locations for initial passenger rail stations one must also take into account regional and operational needs that may alter the overall passenger rail station location recommendations. After conducting a comparative analysis of the target areas with the evaluation criteria for local needs, the target areas in each community were ranked as shown on the following page:

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Table 4.7: Target Area Rankings by Municipality

	Town of Sheffield	Town of Great Barrington	Town of Stockbridge	Town of Lee	Town of Lenox	City of Pittsfield
1	Sheffield Center	Downtown Great Barrington	South Street to East Main Street	Downtown Lee	Crystal Street	Downtown Pittsfield
2	West Stahl Road to Connecticut	Housatonic	Glendale Middle Road	Columbia Street	Willow Creek Road	West Housatonic Street to West Street
3	Cook Road	Van Deusenville	Glendale	Route 102	New Lenox Road	South Street to West Housatonic Street
4	Town Line to Sheffield-Egremont Road	North Plain: Pearl, Welcome, George	Cherry Street to South Street	Turnpike to West Park Street		Holmes Road
5	Rannapo Road/Ashley Falls Road	North Plain: South of Division Street		Pleasant Street to Turnpike		
6		South Main Street		Greylock Street to Lenox Line		

Map 4.3: Pittsfield Target Areas



A summary of the results of the comparative analysis for each community is provided below along with a narrative of the analysis for each target area.

City of Pittsfield

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Pittsfield Target Areas

A passenger rail station located in the Downtown Pittsfield target area with abundant commercial activity, good pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity and no known environmental constraints would provide the greatest benefit to the city. The West Housatonic Street to West Street target area with commercial activity and pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity would provide the second greatest benefit to the city and is an alternative to the Downtown Pittsfield target area. The remaining two target areas received a poor rating because of their lack of commercial activity, poor connectivity, incompatibility with community development efforts and surrounding land uses and a high number of environmental constraints.

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Table 4.8: Pittsfield Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
Downtown Pittsfield	Excellent	YES	YES	YES	YES	PARTIAL
West Housatonic Street to West Street	Good	YES	PARTIAL	NO	YES	PARTIAL
South Street to West Housatonic Street	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Holmes Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

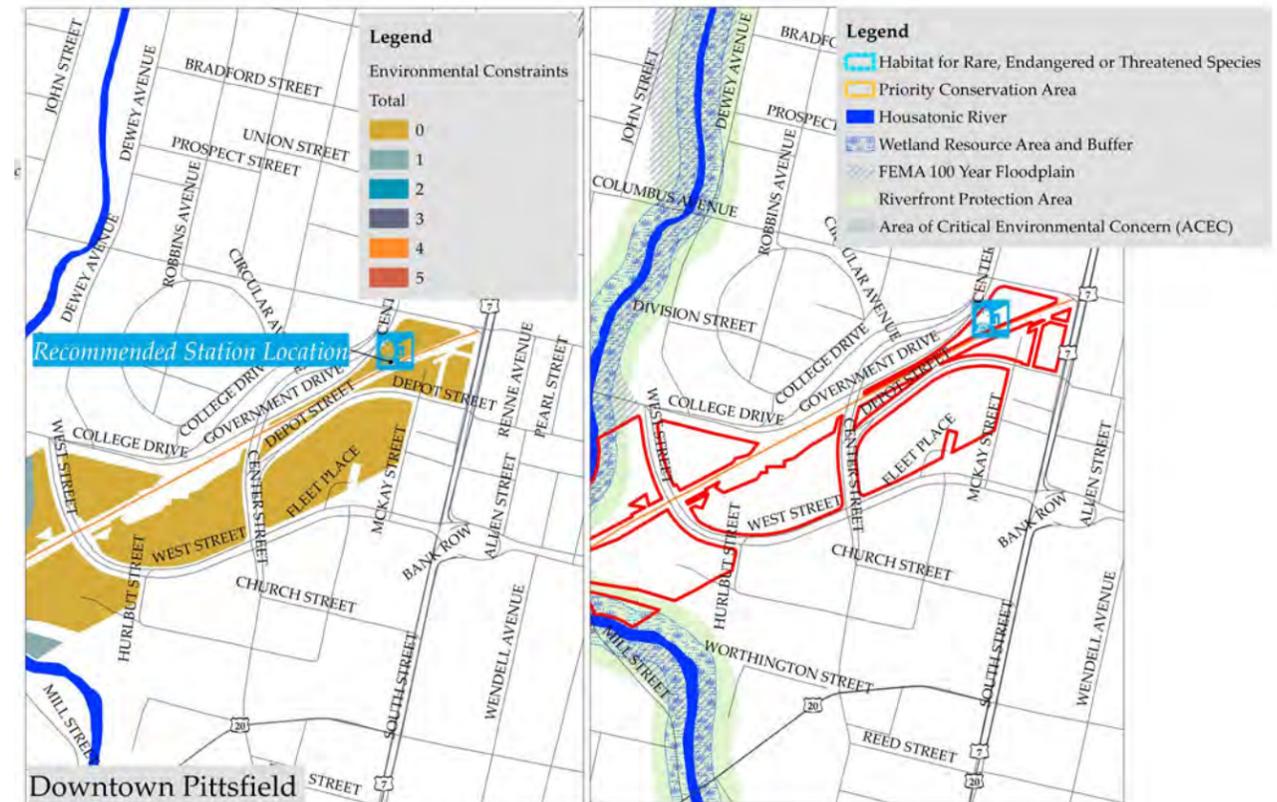
See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Narratives:

1 - Downtown Pittsfield:

The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center is located in this target area. This target area is highly conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial activity on North Street and adjacent areas. The downtown area has a large number of retail, food establishments, places of accommodation and cultural attractions that would benefit from additional people frequenting the downtown area. The use of this target area as a passenger rail station would make excellent use of the existing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity of the downtown area. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Routes 7, 9 and 20 serving the downtown area. In addition, the Intermodal Center provides passengers with direct access to the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority’s regional public bus system, and this target area is very conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station directly supports the city’s community development efforts along the North Street corridor. The city recently completed a \$2.6 million dollar streetscape project on North Street and will spend another \$3 million dollars on additional streetscape and pedestrian plaza improvements on North Street. The mixed use development of the densely populated downtown area is compatible with a passenger rail station and this area may present future opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD). A very small portion of this target area is located in one or more of the following Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

2 - West Housatonic Street: to West Street

This target area is conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial activity on West Housatonic Street. The commercial activity on West Housatonic Street is considerably less than that in the downtown area, but commercial establishments are located in this target area. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not as well developed as the downtown area although continuous sidewalks do exist between the target area and the downtown area along West Housatonic Street (Route 20) and West Street. Automobile connections to the downtown and surrounding areas are provided by West Housatonic Street (Route 20) and West Street. Access to public transportation is limited to a BRTA public bus

route on the south side of the target area on West Housatonic Street (Route 20) and the north side of the target area on College Drive/West Street. This target area is partially conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the city's community development efforts aimed at revitalizing the North Street commercial corridor. Encouraging growth outside of the downtown area between West Street and West Housatonic Street may undermine those efforts. This predominately mixed use area, with several industrial uses and the City of Pittsfield's Department of Public Works yard is compatible with a passenger rail station and may present future opportunities for Transit Oriented

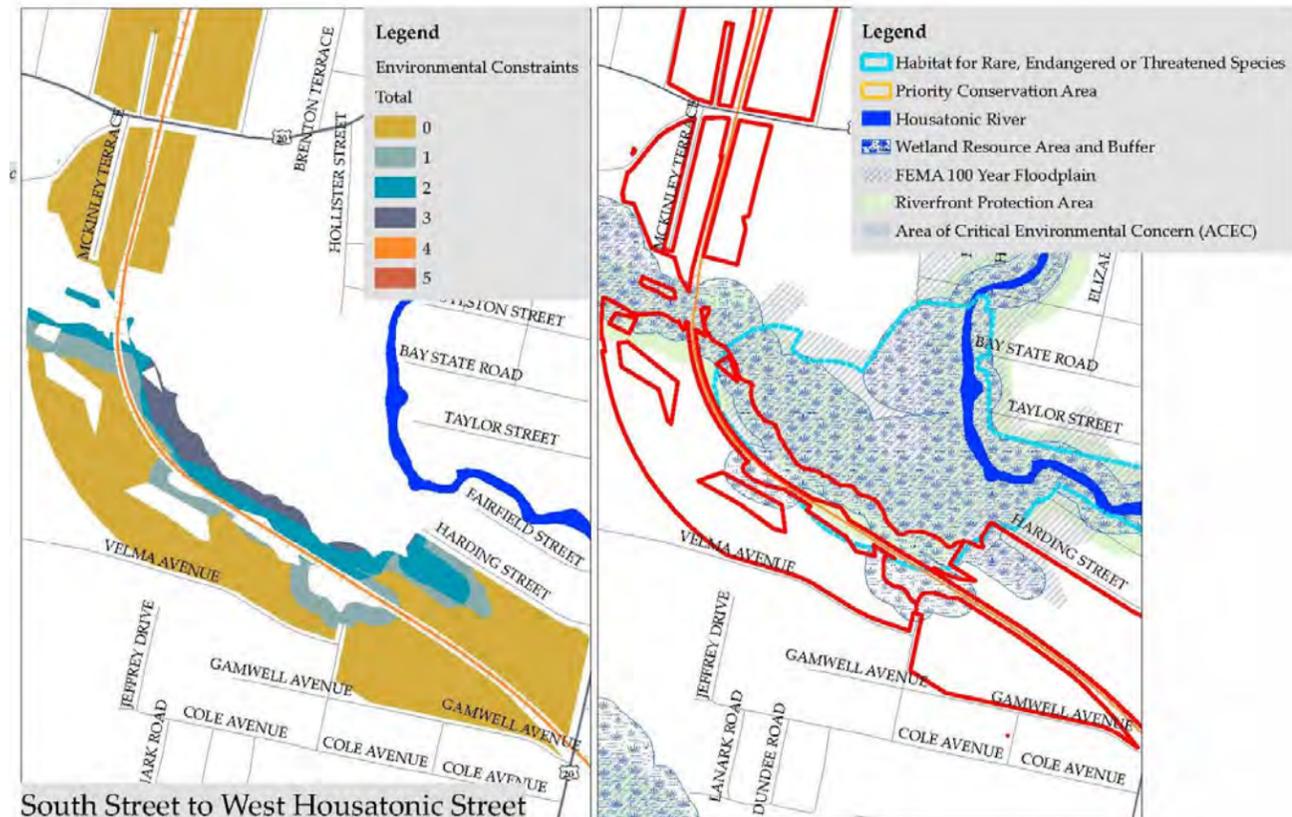
Development (TOD). Small areas of this target area are located in one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.

3 - South Street: to West Housatonic Street

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is predominately undeveloped with very few roads, a small amount of residential development and no commercial activity. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed except for the sidewalks along West Housatonic Street (Route 20) and South Street (Routes 7 & 20). Automobile connections into the target area do not currently exist, although good automobile connectivity exists at

the extreme northern and southern ends of the target area on West Housatonic Street (Route 20) and South Street (Routes 7 & 20).

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the city's community development efforts aimed at revitalizing the North Street commercial corridor. Encouraging growth outside of the downtown area between West Housatonic Street and South Street may undermine those efforts. The mostly undeveloped and residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Portions of this target area are located in one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, and Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

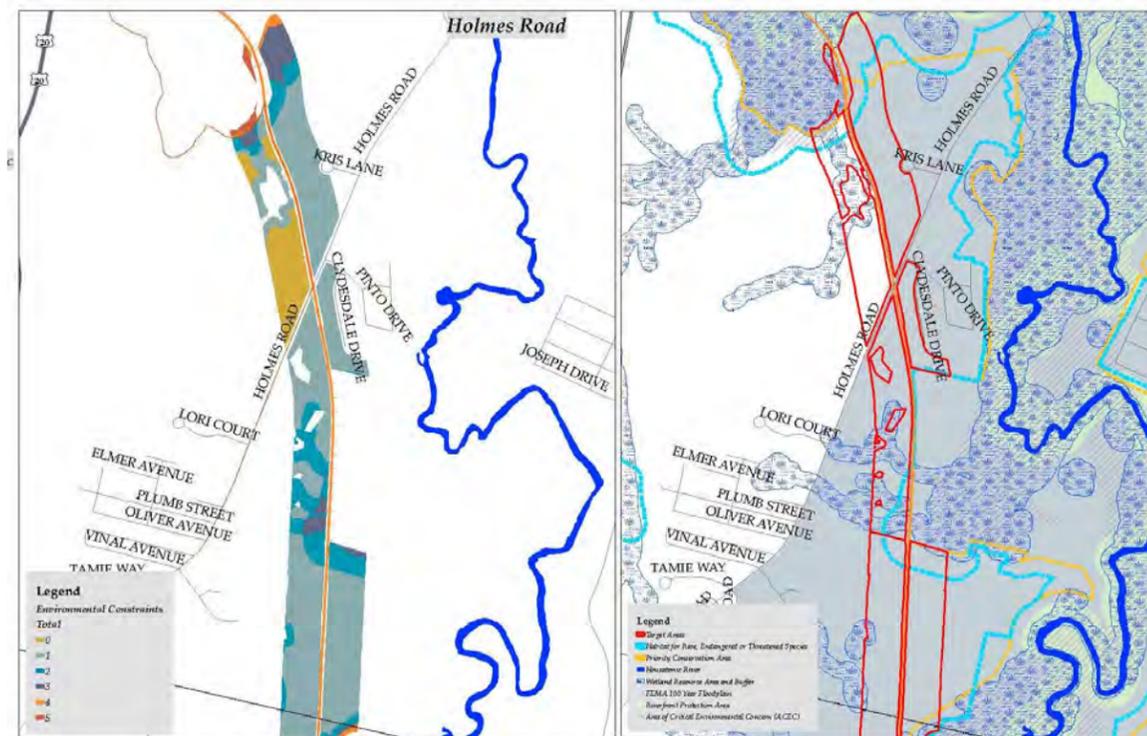


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

4 -Holmes Road:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area predominately consists of residential and undeveloped land with no commercial activity. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the only automobile connection from the target area is provided on Holmes Road. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the city's community development efforts aimed at revitalizing the North Street commercial corridor. Encouraging growth outside of the downtown area on Holmes Road may undermine those efforts. The predominately residential and undeveloped nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Portions of this target area are located in one or more of the following: the Upper Housatonic River Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC), Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species and/or a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Lenox

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Lenox Target Areas

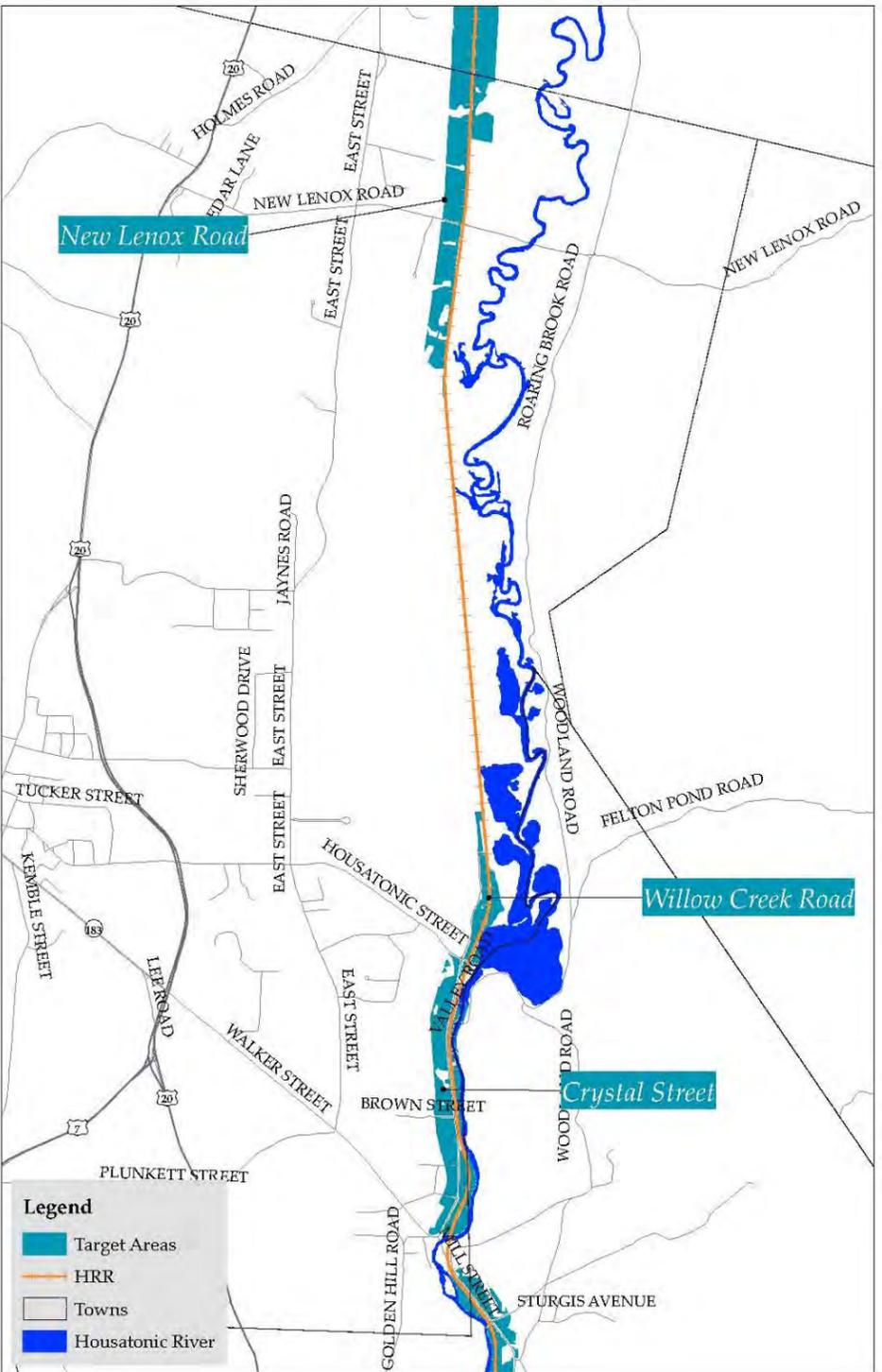
The rail corridor passes through the sparsely developed and environmentally constrained eastern part of Lenox. The more developed downtown area in Lenox is located approximately two miles to the west of the rail corridor. The Crystal Street target area is best because the target area includes the small village of Lenox Dale. The remaining two target areas are rated as poor with the Willow Creek Road target area second and the New Lenox Road target area third.

Table 4.9: Lenox Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
Crystal Street	Fair	PARTIAL	NO	YES	YES	NO
Willow Creek Road	Poor	PARTIAL	NO	NO	YES	NO
New Lenox Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Map 4.4: Lenox Target Areas



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Narratives:

1 - Crystal Street:

This target area is partially conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. Although this target area includes a portion of Lenox Dale this small mixed use village has a limited amount of commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections exist within the small village area, but do not extend into the surrounding areas. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are provided by Crystal Street. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route that makes a stop in Lenox Dale, and this target area is partially conducive to facilitating the use of proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

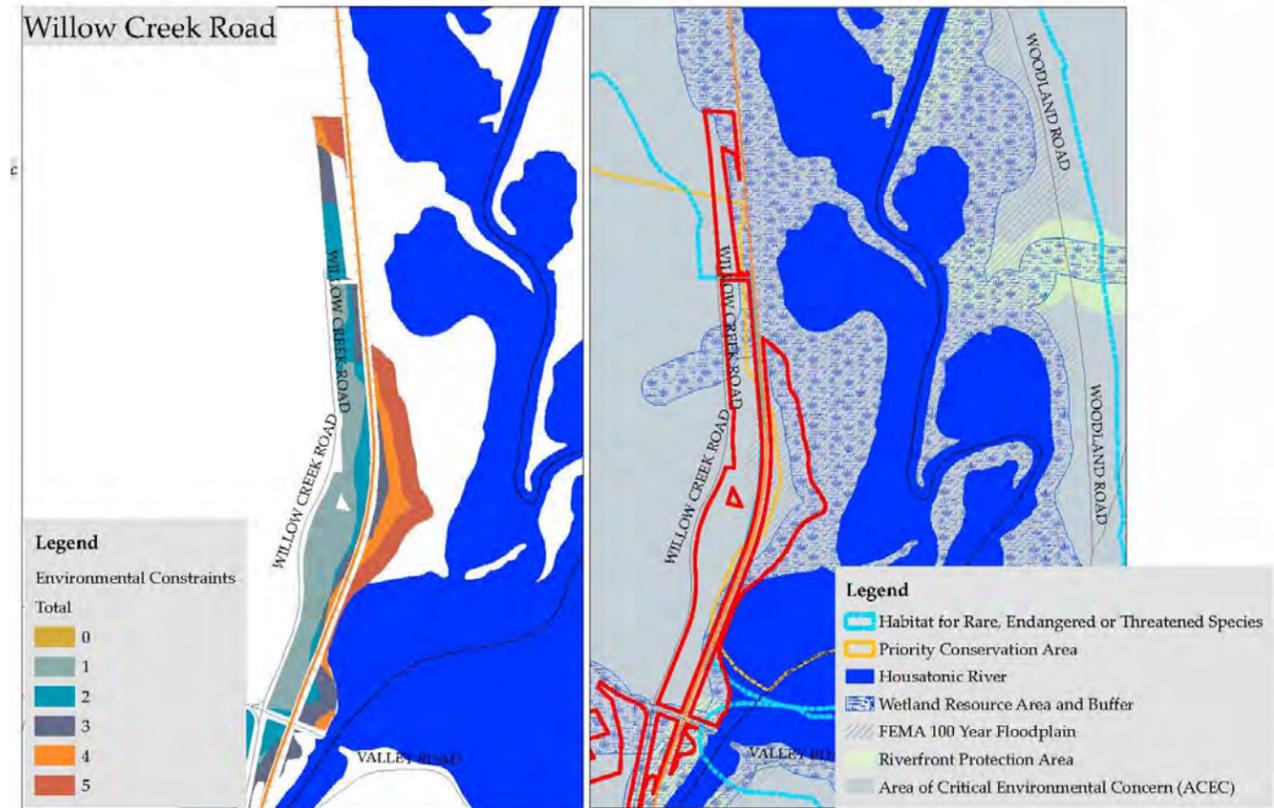
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's planning efforts in encouraging growth in Lenox Dale. According to the 2004 Community Development Plan (Lenox CDP), Lenox Dale is recognized as a neighborhood composed of residential, business and industrial uses that would benefit from increased pedestrian and biking connections to the historic village district. The 1999 Lenox Master Plan seeks to promote the use of the villages as true mixed use centers. The mixed use nature of the target area, especially the southern part of the target area, is compatible with a passenger rail station. The entire target area is located in the Upper Housatonic River ACEC and smaller portions of the target area are located in one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.



2 - Willow Creek Road:

The historic Lenox station is located in this target area. This target area is partially conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. There is little development in this small target area and it is located approximately ¾ of a mile from Lenox Dale and approximately two miles from the downtown area in Lenox. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connections to the surrounding areas are by Crystal Street and Housatonic Street. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route that passes by the southern portion of this target area.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's planning efforts in encouraging growth in Lenox Dale, the historic downtown village area and the Routes 7 & 20 corridor (2004 Lenox CDP, 1999 Lenox Master Plan). However, a passenger rail station would likely be compatible with the character of the community as the existing historic Lenox station, now a railroad museum is located in this target area. The entire target area is located in the Upper Housatonic River ACEC and large portions of the target area are located in one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species (NHESP) Priority Conservation Area and/or a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

5 - New Lenox Road:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area predominately consists of residential and undeveloped land with no commercial activity. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target do not exist and the only automobile connection from the target area is provided on New Lenox Road. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's planning efforts in encouraging growth in Lenox Dale, the historic downtown village area and the Routes 7 & 20 corridor (2004 Lenox CDP, 1999 Lenox Master Plan). The predominately residential and undeveloped nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. The entire target area is located in the Upper Housatonic River ACEC and smaller portions of the target area are located in one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species (NHESP) Priority Conservation Area and/or a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Lee

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Lee Target Areas

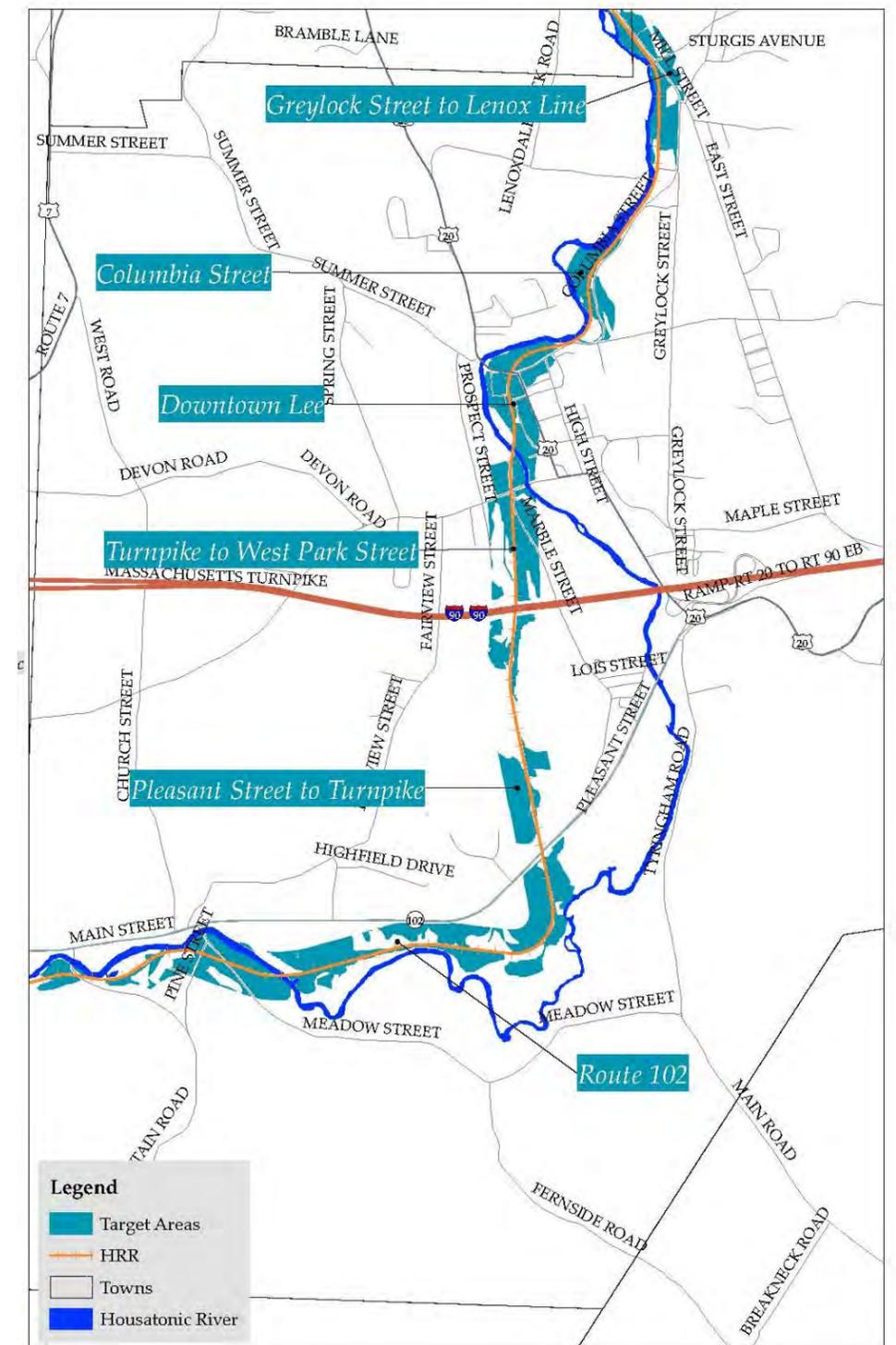
A passenger rail station located in the Downtown Lee target area with considerable commercial activity, good pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity and limited environmental constraints would provide the greatest benefit to the town. The Route 102 target area and Columbia Street target area received a fair rating. The Route 102 target area has very limited commercial activity, adequate automobile connections and the potential for growth that would provide benefits to the town. Similarly, the Columbia Street target area, with connectivity to the downtown area and compatibility with the character of the community in that area would also provide benefits to the town. The remaining three target areas received a poor rating because of their lack of commercial activity, poor connectivity and incompatibility with community development efforts and surrounding land uses.

Table 4.10: Lee Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
Downtown Lee	Excellent	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Columbia Street	Fair	NO	PARTIAL	YES	YES	NO
Route 102	Fair	PARTIAL	PARTIAL	PARTIAL	YES	NO
Turnpike to West Park Street	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL
Pleasant Street (Route 102) to Turnpike	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL
Greylock Street to Lenox Line	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Map 4.5: Lee Target Areas



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Narratives:

1 Downtown Lee:

The historic Lee station, now a restaurant, is located in this target area. This target area is highly conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial activity in the more populated downtown area. The downtown area and adjacent areas have a considerable number of retail, food establishments, places of accommodation and cultural attractions that would benefit from additional people frequenting the downtown area. The use of this target area as a passenger rail station would make excellent use of the existing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity of the downtown area. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Route 20 serving the immediate downtown area and Route 102 and Interstate 90 approximately ½ mile from the downtown area. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route. This target area is very conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area (2000 Lee Master Plan & 2004 Lee Community Development Plan (Lee CDP)). Portions of the target area, particularly the west side of the downtown area, may be suitable for additional mixed use development. A passenger rail station in this target area would fit with the character of the downtown area and would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. The Eagle Mill located in the north side of the downtown area is slated for redevelopment as a mixed use development, including a hotel, residential units and retail. A passenger rail station in the downtown area would complement this development nicely. Small areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species. All of the environmental constraints are attributable to the Housatonic River where it passes through the target area.

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is dominated by the vacant Columbia Mill, a former paper mill, located between the rail corridor and the Housatonic River. Pedestrian and bicycling connections to the downtown area exist along Columbia Street. Automobile connections to

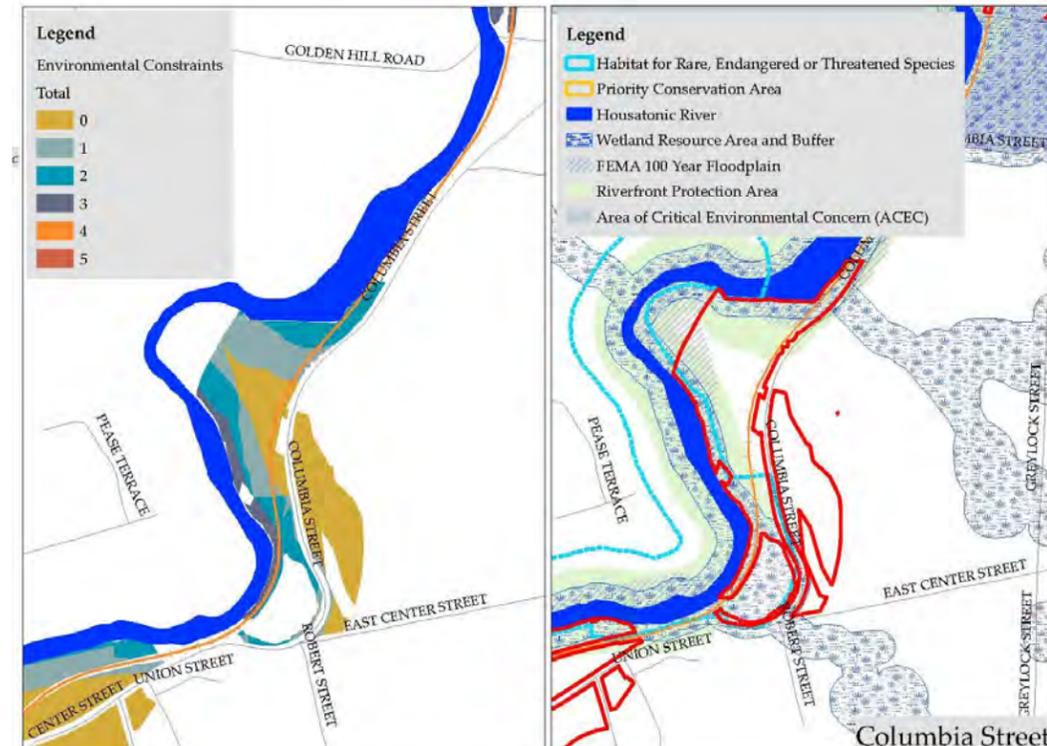
the target area are provided by Columbia Street. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route; however, this target area is partially conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

2 - Columbia Street:

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area and, to a lesser extent, the Route 102 corridor. However, the town has focused on the redevelopment of the vacant paper mills including the Columbia Mill. The Town of Lee is currently studying the re-use potential for a number of vacant paper mills in the town. The Columbia Mill complex poses significant obstacles to the use of the target area as a potential passenger rail station, but also presents a unique opportunity if the passenger rail station and the redeveloped mill complex were combined. The Columbia Mill was recently purchased by Niagara Worldwide and the company is exploring its reuse potential. Areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, a FEMA 100 Year Flood Plain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened Species & Special Concern Species.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area and, to a lesser extent, the Route 102 corridor. However, the town has focused on the redevelopment of the vacant paper mills including the Columbia Mill. The Town of Lee is currently studying the re-use potential for a number of vacant paper mills in the town. The Columbia Mill complex poses significant obstacles to the use of the target area as a potential passenger rail station, but also presents a unique opportunity if the passenger rail station and the redeveloped mill complex were combined. The Columbia Mill was recently purchased by Niagara Worldwide and the company is exploring its reuse potential. Areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, a FEMA 100 Year Flood Plain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened Species & Special Concern Species.

the target area are provided by Columbia Street. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route; however, this target area is partially conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

3 - Route 102:

This target area is partially conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. The Route 102 corridor has limited commercial activity spread out in strip development fashion across the target area. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed although Route 102 is currently being considered for bicycle accommodations. However, the automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Route 102 providing a direct connection to the Town of Stockbridge and surrounding areas in Lee as well as town to the east along Route 20 and south of Lee. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route that passes the target area on Route 102.

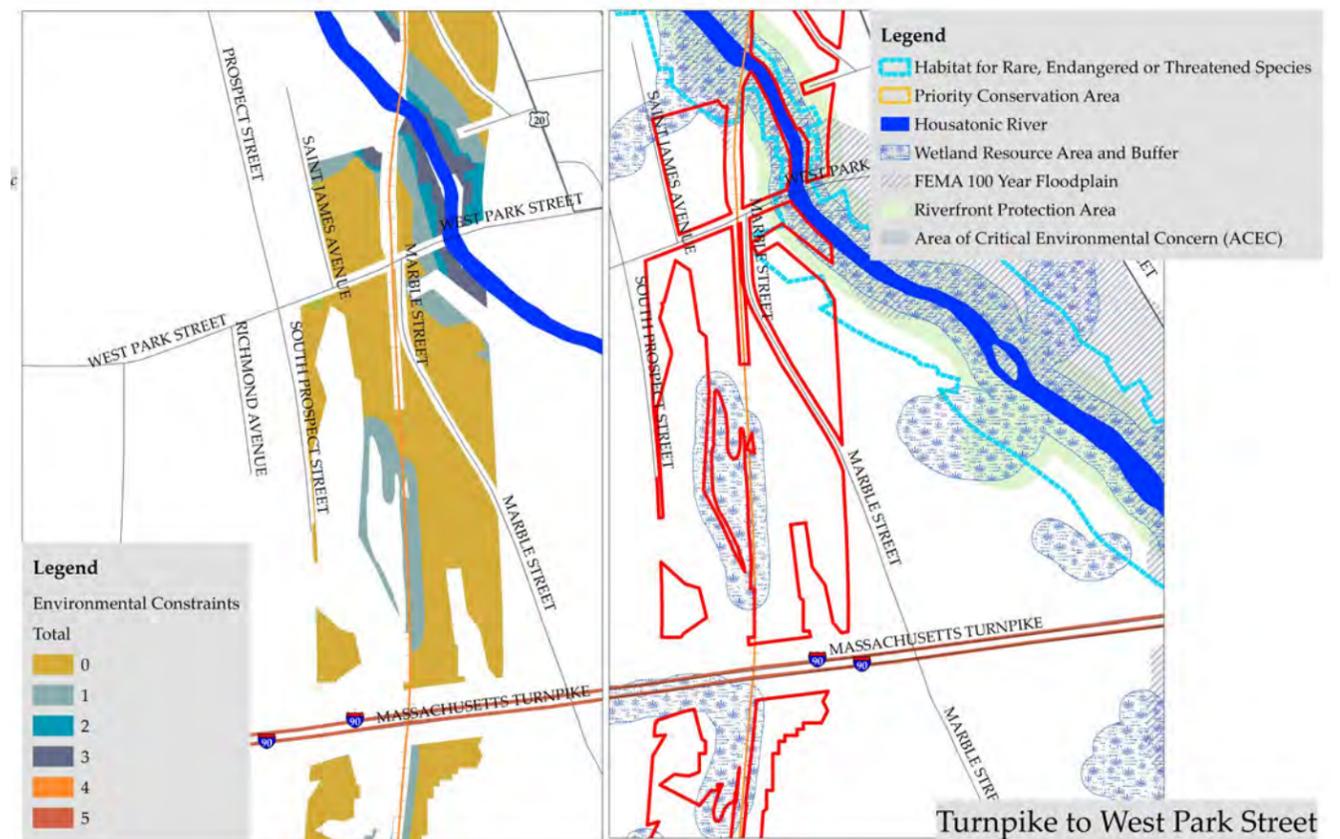
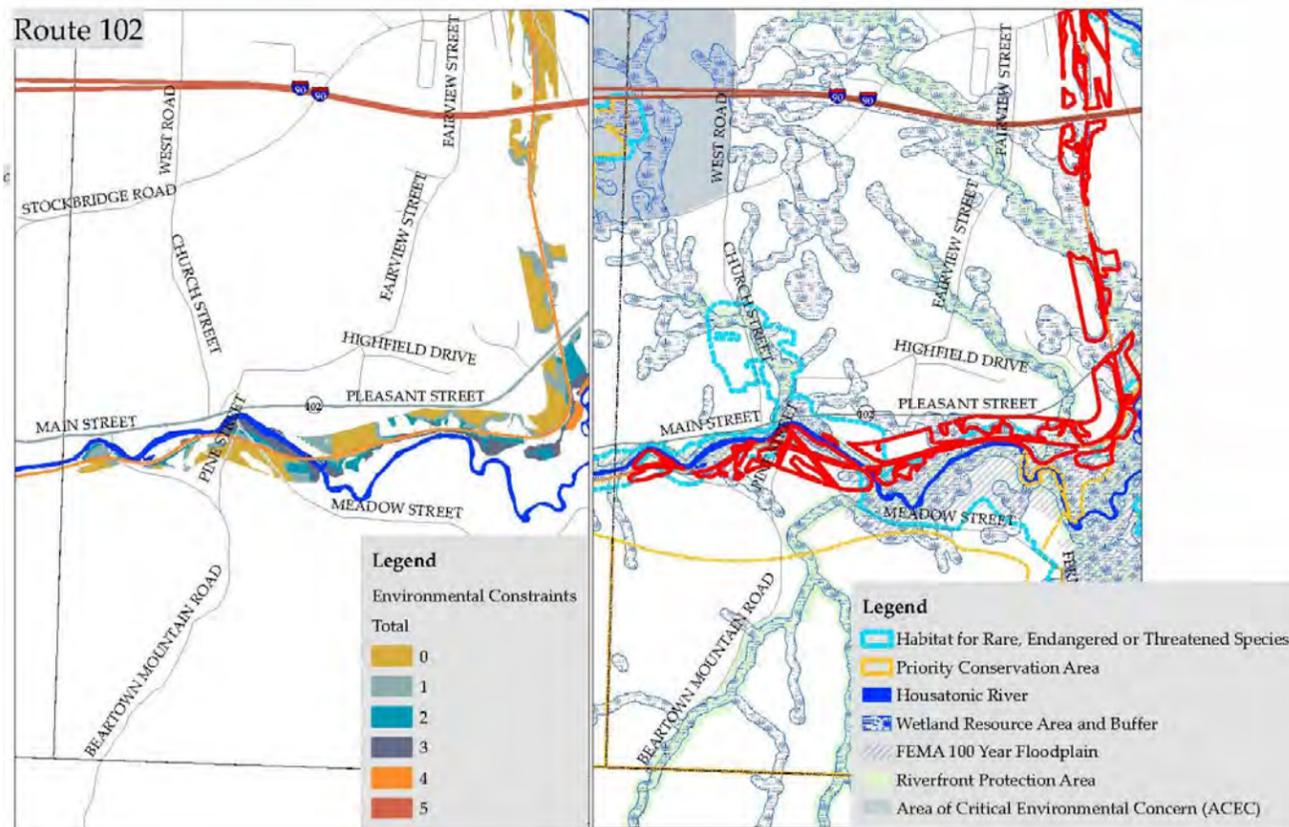
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station partially complements the town's planning efforts. The 2000 Lee Master Plan references favorably a 1995 BRPC Commercial Corridor Retail Build Out Analysis that encourages development along Route 102. The 2004 Lee CDP identifies the Route 102 area as an area in distress that needs a cohesive redevelopment plan. However, a passenger rail station located in this target area instead of the downtown area would provide fewer economic benefits to the town. A passenger rail station in this target area would fit with the character of the area and would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Nearly half of the land in this target area has no environmental constraints; the remaining land in the target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront

Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species, and/or NHESP Priority Conservation Area.

4 - Turnpike to West Park Street:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area predominately consists of industrial, residential and undeveloped land with no commercial activity. The pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the only automobile connection from the target area is provided on Marble Street, a local road. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area and to a lesser extent the Route 102 corridor. The predominately industrial, residential and undeveloped nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small portions of this target area are located in a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer with the remaining areas free of environmental constraints.

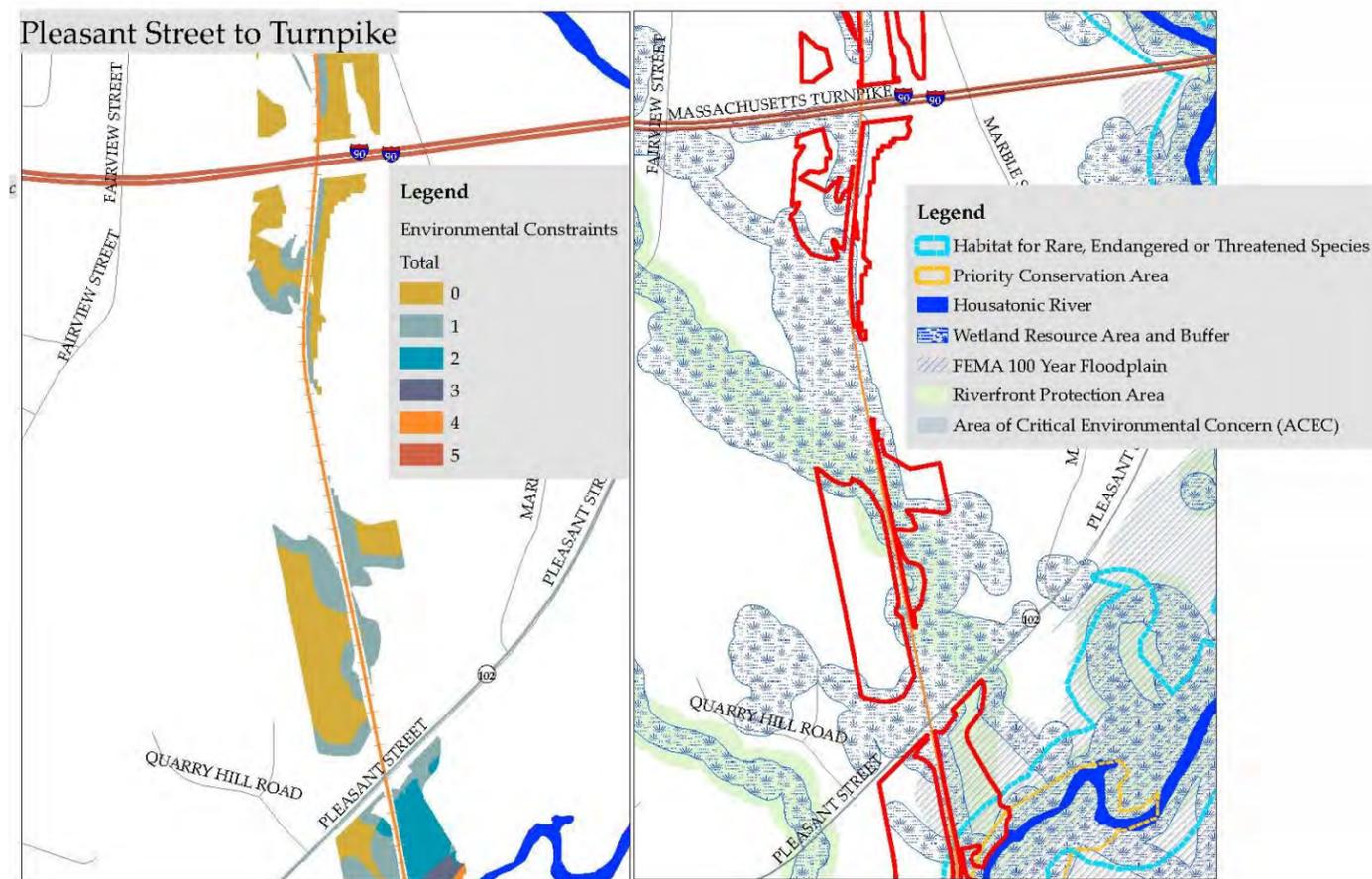


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

5 - Pleasant Street (Route 102) to Turnpike:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is isolated and mostly undeveloped with a large quarry being the dominant natural feature of this target area. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target do not exist and the only automobile connection from the target area is provided by Marble Street, a local road. The majority of the target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route, except for the extreme southern end of the target area on Route 102 where a single BRTA public bus route passes.

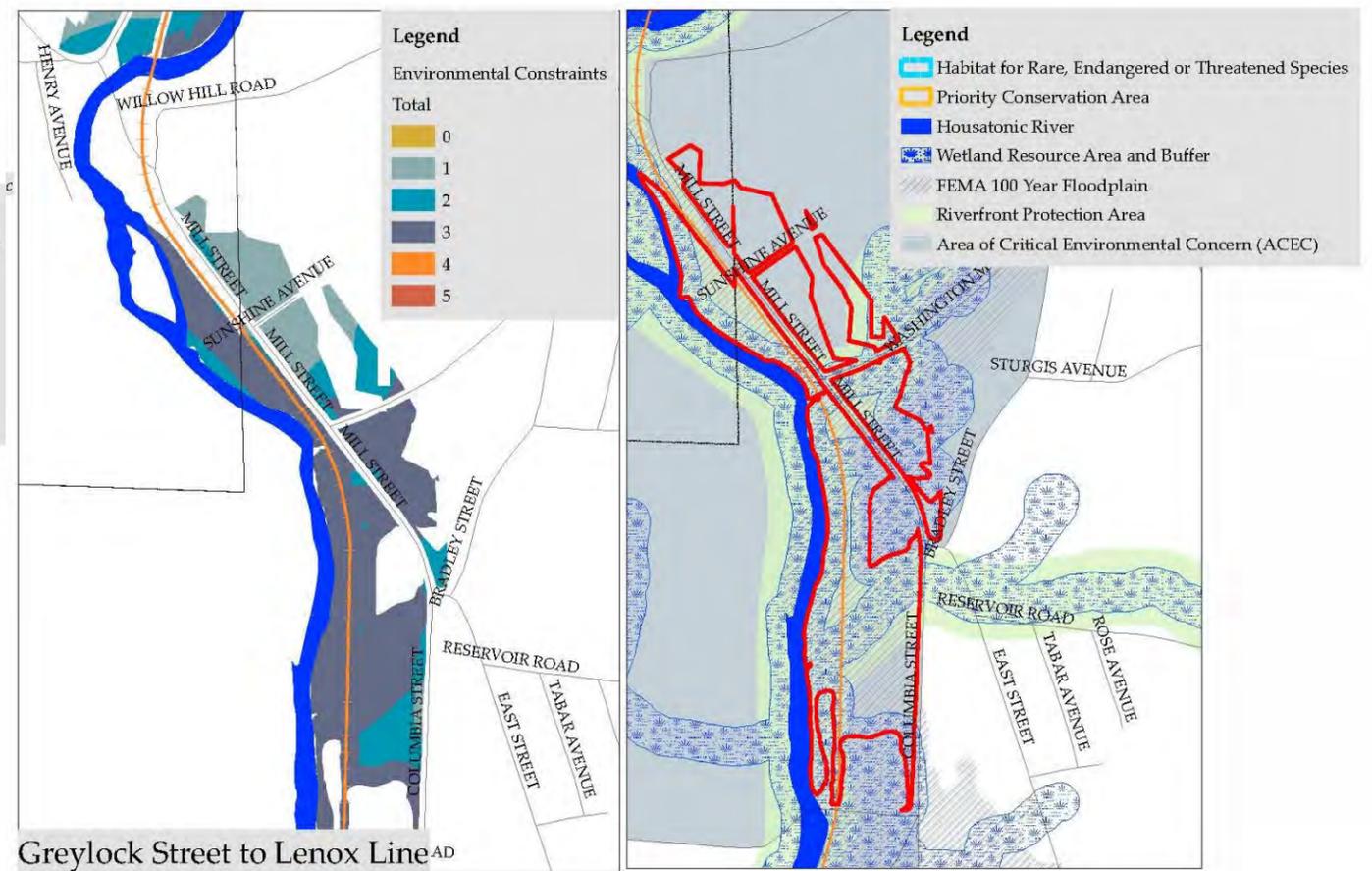
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area and to a lesser extent the Route 102 corridor. The predominately industrial and undeveloped nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small portions of this target area are located in a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer with remaining areas free from environmental constraints.



6 - Greylock Street to Lenox Line:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. Located in the northeast corner of the Town of Lee this target area consists of low density residential and no commercial uses. The pedestrian and bicycling connections to the downtown area in Lee are not well developed. Automobile connections to the target area are provided by Mill Street and Columbia Street. Access to public transportation is limited to a single bus route that passes through the target area on Mill Street.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area and to a lesser extent the Route 102 corridor. The low density residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. All of the land in the target area is located within one or more of the following: the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Stockbridge

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Stockbridge Target Areas

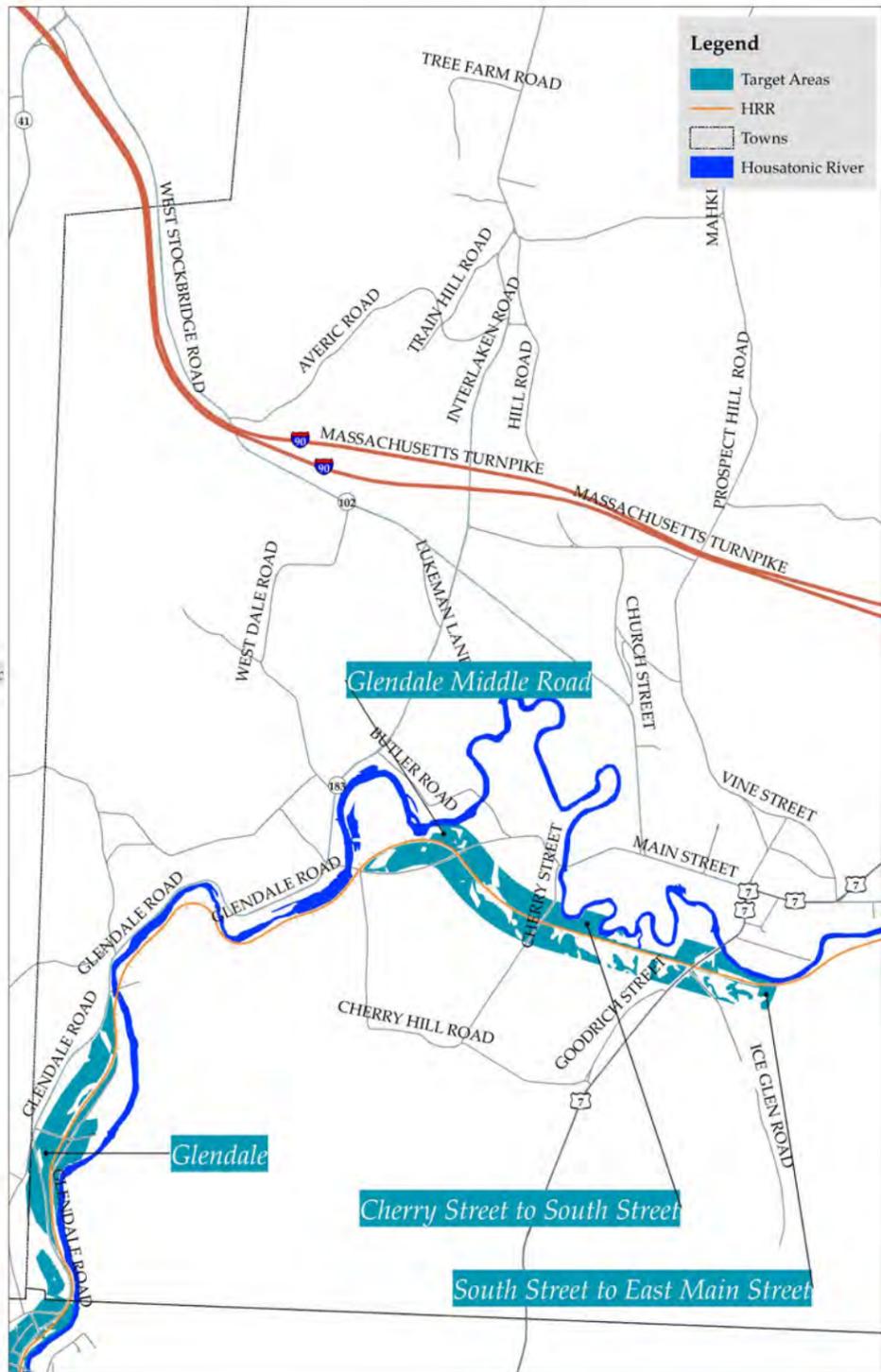
One goal of the 1996 Stockbridge Master Plan is to support alternative forms of transportation and the restoration of passenger train service to Stockbridge is listed as an objective. If passenger rail service is restored, a passenger rail station located in the South Street to East Main Street target area with considerable commercial activity nearby, pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity and compatibility with the surrounding area would provide the greatest benefit to the town. The remaining three target areas received a poor rating because of their lack of commercial activity, poor connectivity with surrounding areas and incompatibility with community development efforts and surrounding land uses.

Table 4.11: Stockbridge Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
South Street to East Main Street	Excellent	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Glendale Middle Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL
Glendale	Poor	NO	PARTIAL	NO	NO	NO
Cherry Street to South Street	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Map 4.6: Stockbridge Target Areas



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Narratives:

1 - South Street to East Main Street:

The historic Stockbridge station is located in this target area. This target area is conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is located approximately three tenths of a mile from the downtown area in Stockbridge which has a number of retail establishments, food establishments, places of accommodation and nearby cultural attractions that would benefit from additional people frequenting the downtown area. Pedestrian and bicycling connections from the downtown area to the target area exist, but could be improved especially along Route 7. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Route 7 providing a direct connection to the downtown area and to areas further south towards Great Barrington. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route that passes through the downtown area north of the target area, and this target area is somewhat conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

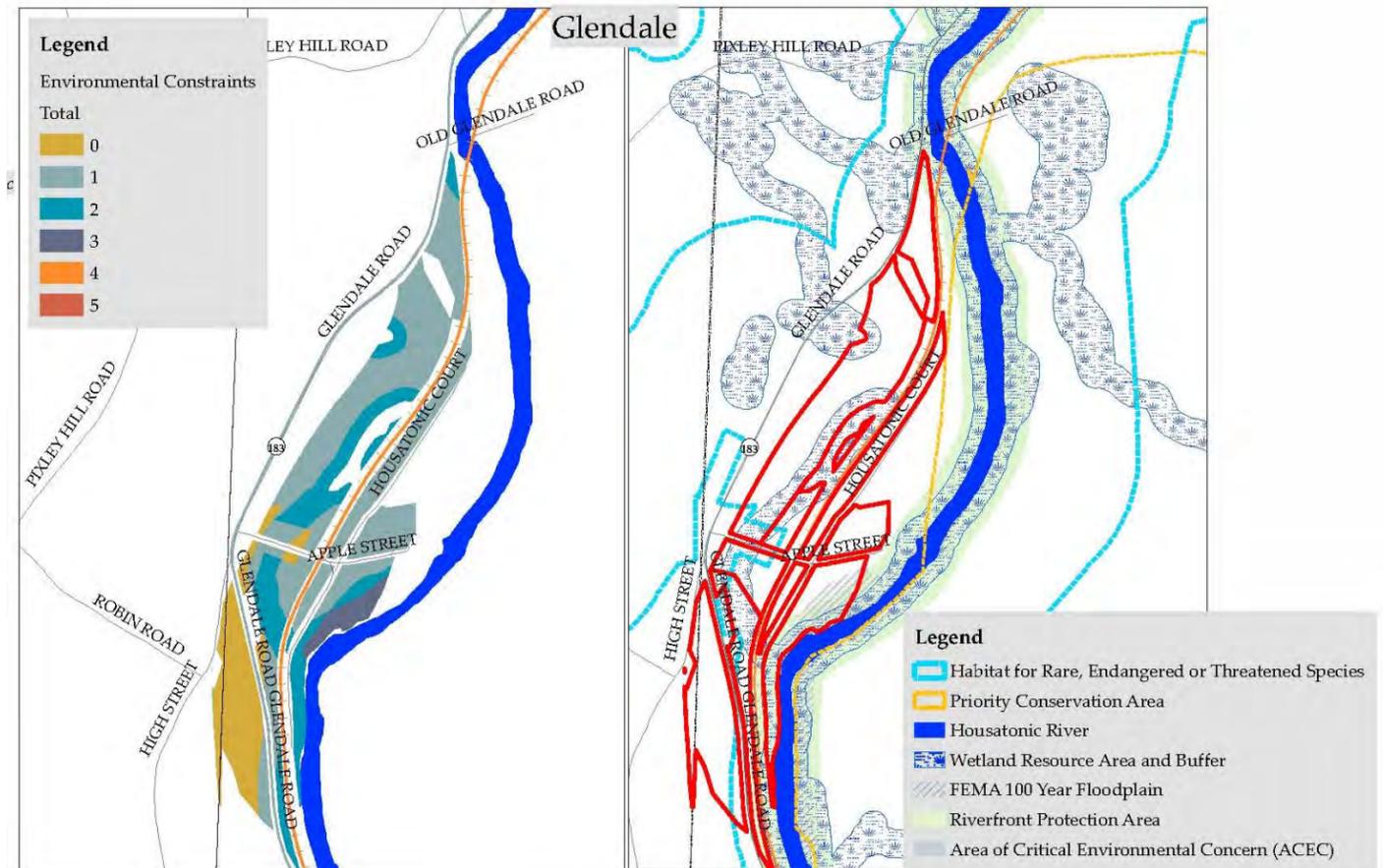
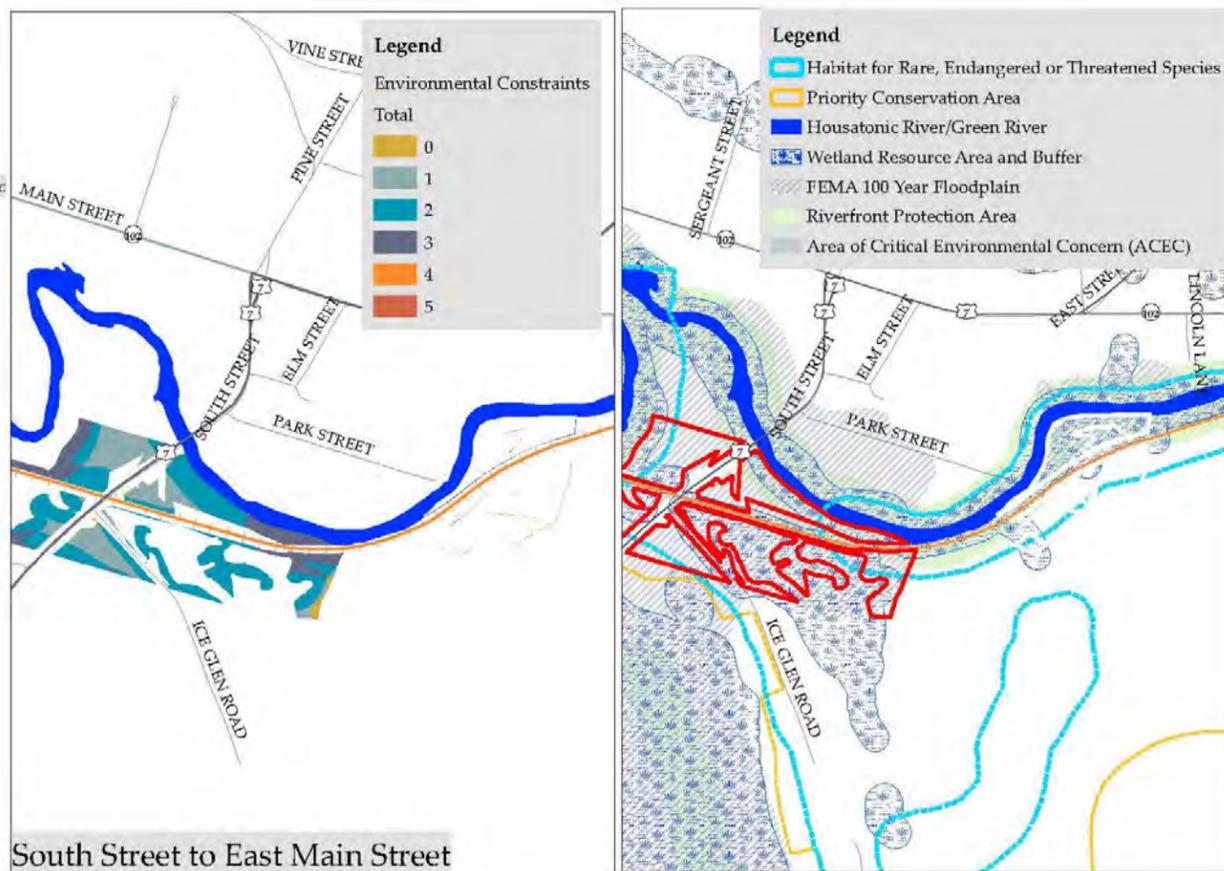
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's community development efforts aimed at preserving the character and existing land use patterns of the town. A passenger rail station in this target area is compatible with the few surrounding land uses in the target area, including the

historic Stockbridge station. Most of the land in the target area is located within one or more of the following: FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

2- Glendale:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a residential area with no commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 183. Access to public transportation is limited to a single BRTA public bus route that passes the target area on Route 183.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at preserving the character and existing land use patterns of the town. The residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Most of the land in the target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

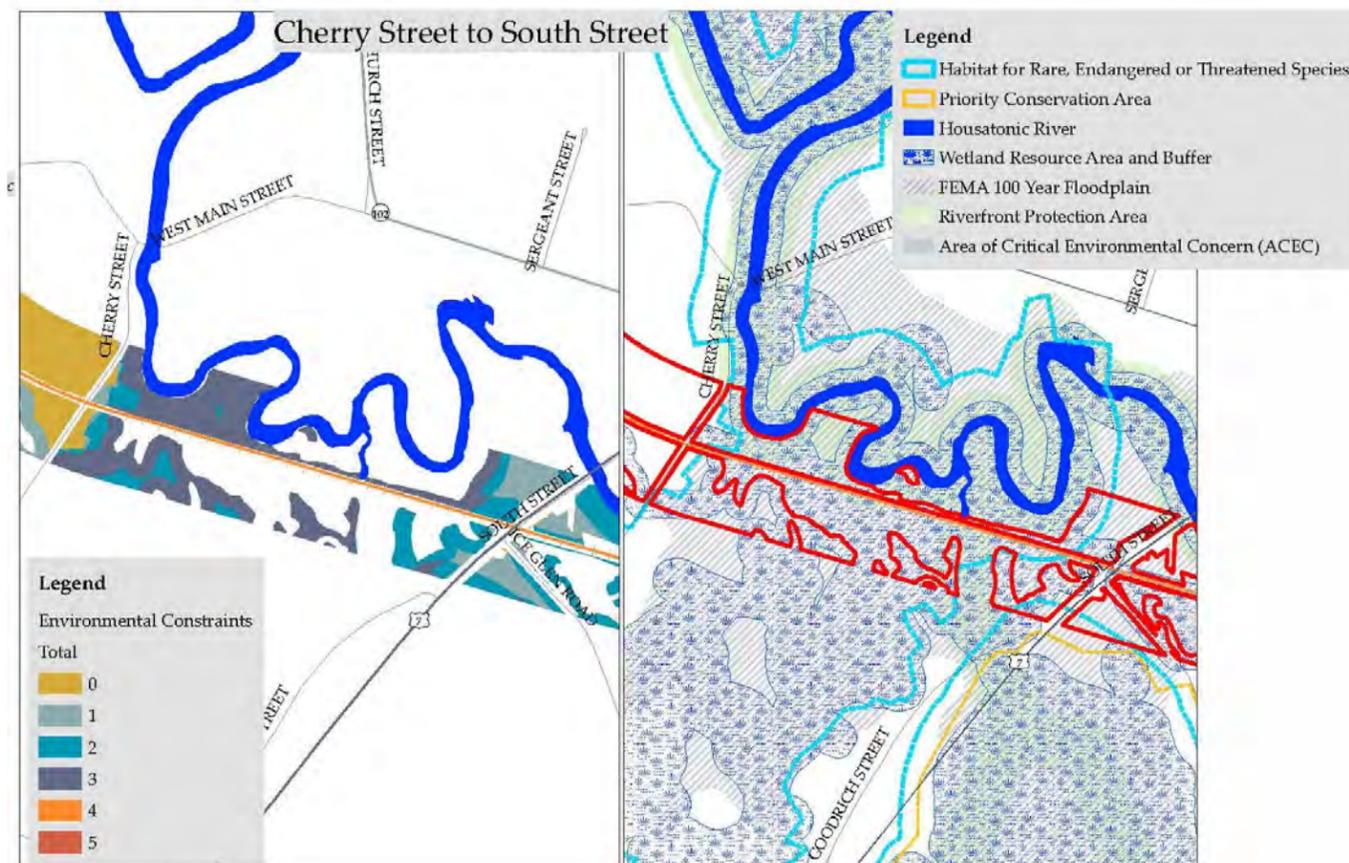


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

3 - Cherry Street to South Street:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is mostly undeveloped with the Stockbridge Country Club occupying most of the land in this target area. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area do not exist and the only automobile connections from the target area are at the extreme eastern end (Route 7) and western end (Cherry Street) of the target area. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

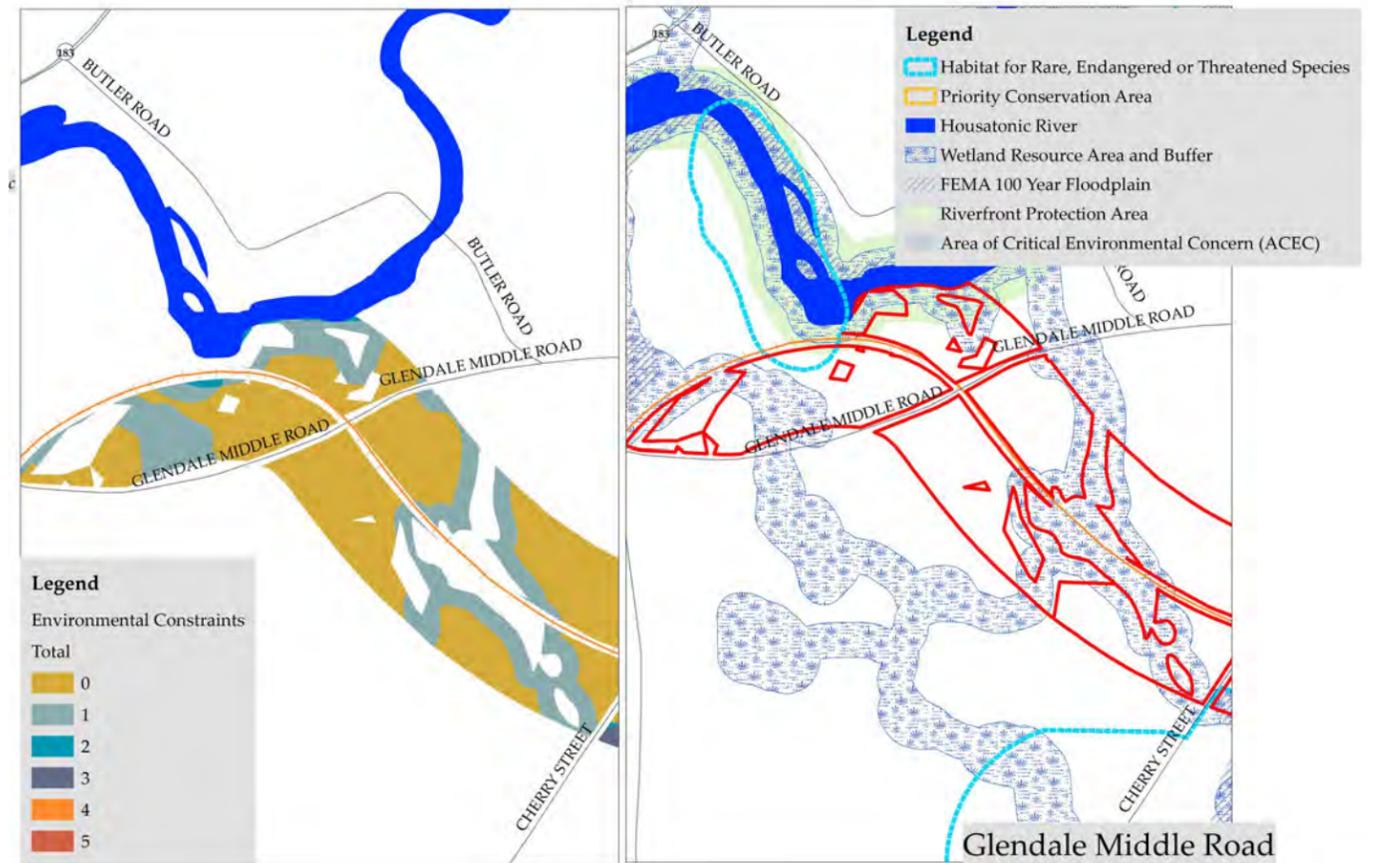
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at preserving the character and existing land use patterns of the town. The predominately residential and undeveloped nature of the target area and its use as a golf course is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Most of the land in the target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.



4 - Glendale Middle Road:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area with no commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Glendale Middle Road, a local road. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at preserving the character and existing land use patterns of the town. The low density residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small portions of this target area are located in a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer with the remaining areas free of environmental constraints.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Great Barrington

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Great Barrington Target Areas

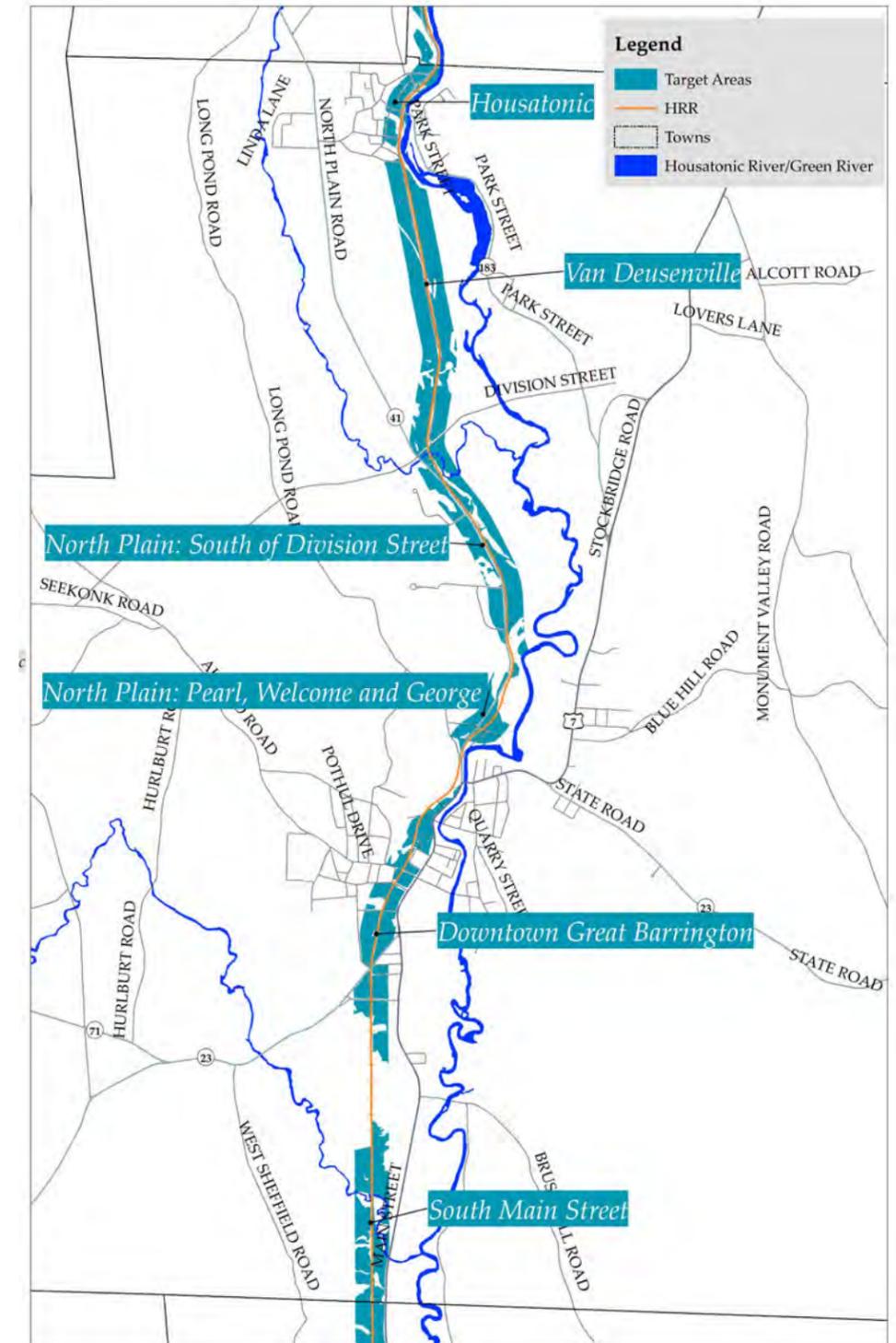
A passenger rail station located in the Downtown Great Barrington target area with considerable commercial activity, good pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity and limited environmental constraints would provide the greatest benefit to the town. The Housatonic target area with limited commercial activity, compatibility with planning efforts and community character and good connectivity within the village would provide the second greatest benefit to the town. The remaining four target areas received a poor rating because of their lack of commercial activity, poor connectivity and incompatibility with community development efforts and surrounding land uses.

Table 4.12: Great Barrington Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
Downtown Great Barrington	Excellent	YES	YES	YES	YES	PARTIAL
Housatonic	Excellent	PARTIAL	YES	YES	YES	PARTIAL
Van Deusenville	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL
North Plain: Pearl, Welcome, George	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	PARTIAL
North Plain: South of Division Street	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
South Main Street	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Map 4.7: Great Barrington Target Areas



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Narratives:

#1 - Downtown Great Barrington:

The historic Great Barrington station is located in this target area. This target area is highly conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial activity in the more developed downtown area. The downtown area and adjacent areas have a considerable number of retail, food establishments, places of accommodation and cultural attractions that would benefit from additional people frequenting the downtown area. The use of this target area as a passenger rail station would make excellent use of the existing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity of the downtown area. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Routes 7 and 41 serving the immediate downtown area. Access to public transportation is limited to a single

BRTA public bus route that stops in the downtown area. This target area is very conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for the downtown area to be a regional hub for business, employment, entertainment and civic life. (2013 Great Barrington Master Plan). A passenger rail station in this target area would fit with the mixed use character of the downtown area and would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Small areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

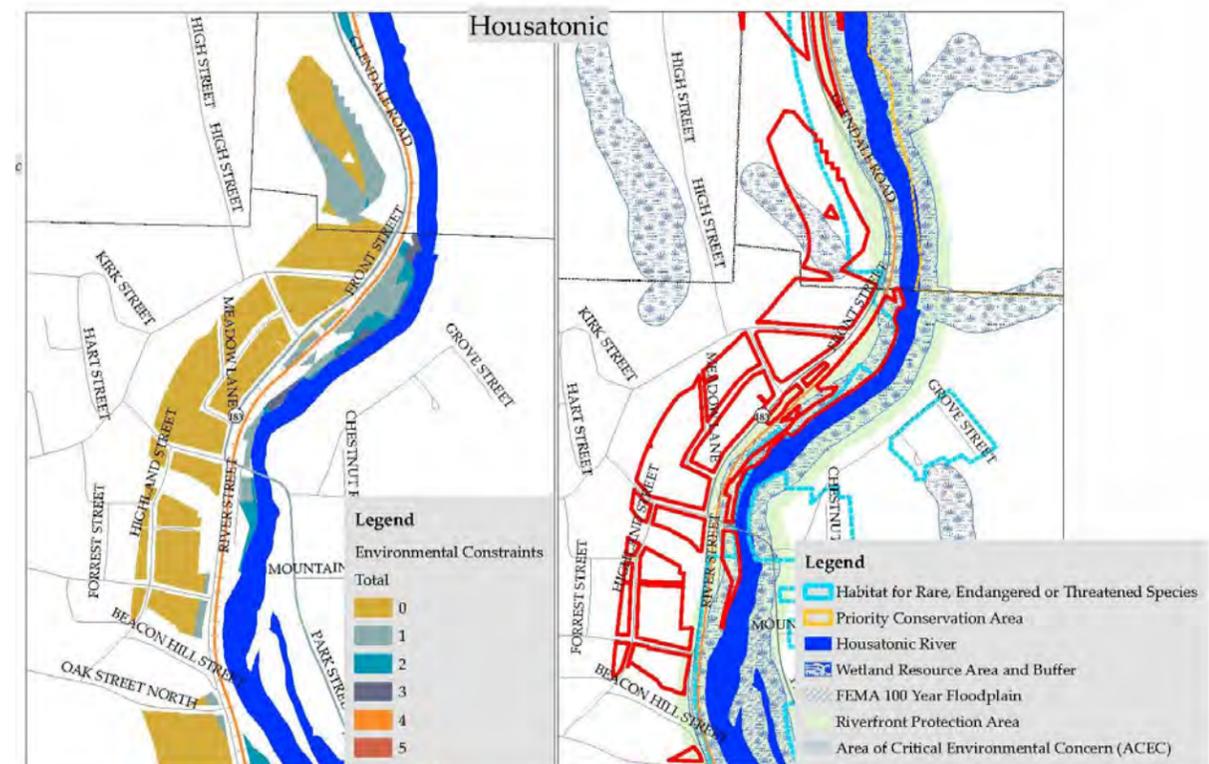
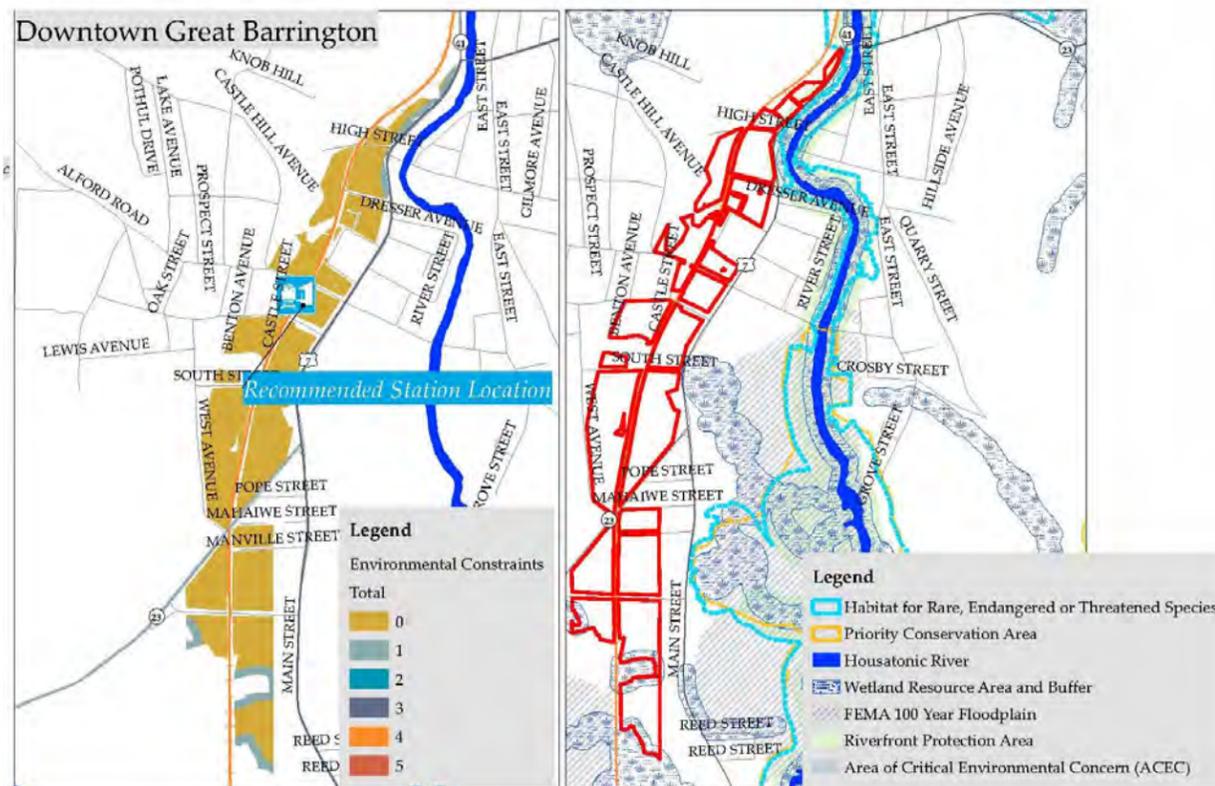
Most of the land within this target area has no environmental constraints.

2 - Housatonic:

This target area is partially conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial activity in Housatonic Village. The level of commercial activity is much lower in the village compared to the downtown area; however, the village presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment as many of the old mill buildings are vacant. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area exist, but could use improvements. A walkability study conducted in the summer of 2012 identified strengths and issues with the pedestrian infrastructure in Housatonic Village. The primary automobile connection from the target area is by Route 183. Access to public transportation is limited

to a single BRTA public bus route that stops in Housatonic Village. This target area is partially conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's community development efforts and planning documents calling for Housatonic Village to become a compact, thriving mixed-use village. (2013 Great Barrington Master Plan). A passenger rail station in this target area would fit with the character of the village area and would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Small areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species. Most of the land within this target area has no environmental constraints.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

3 - Van Deusenville:

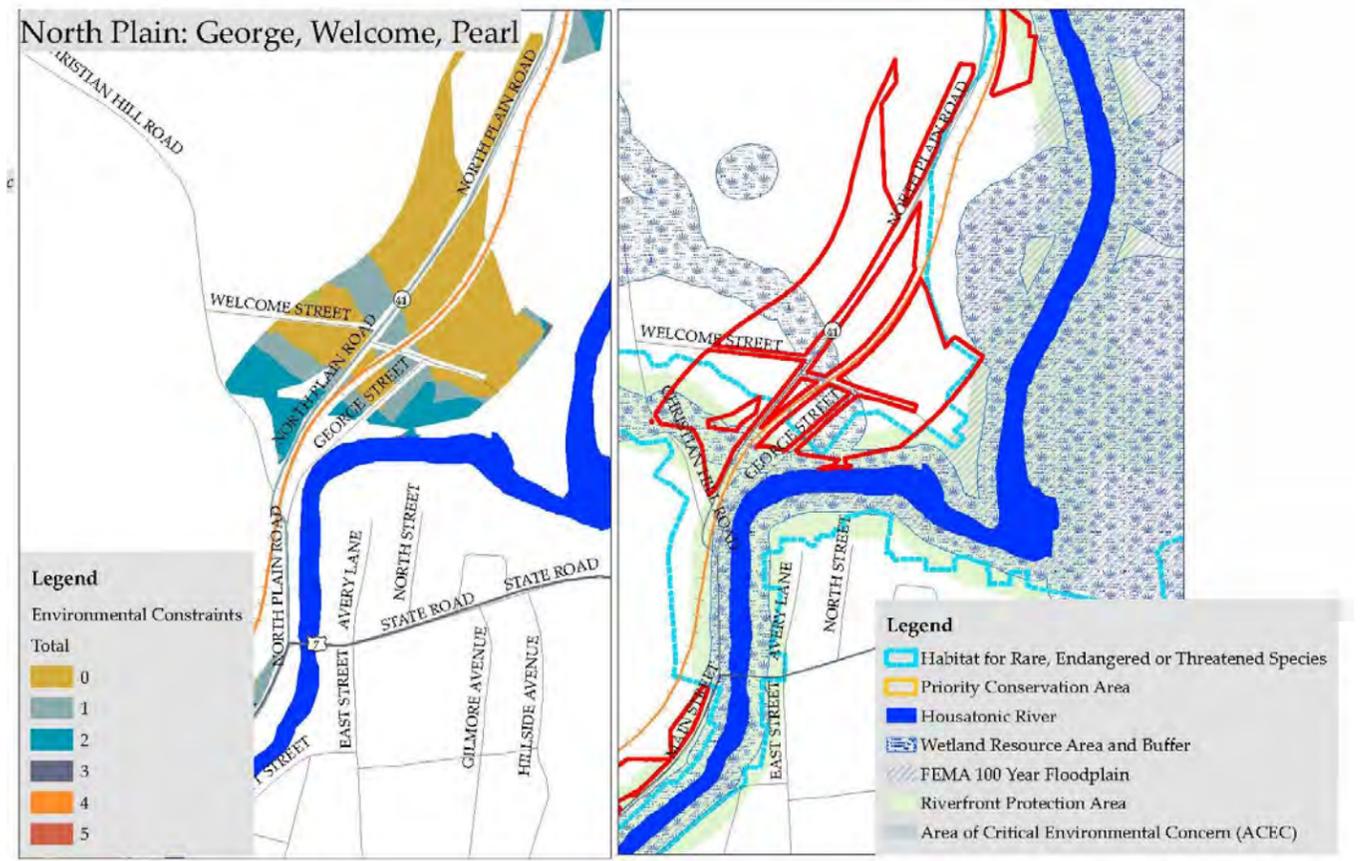
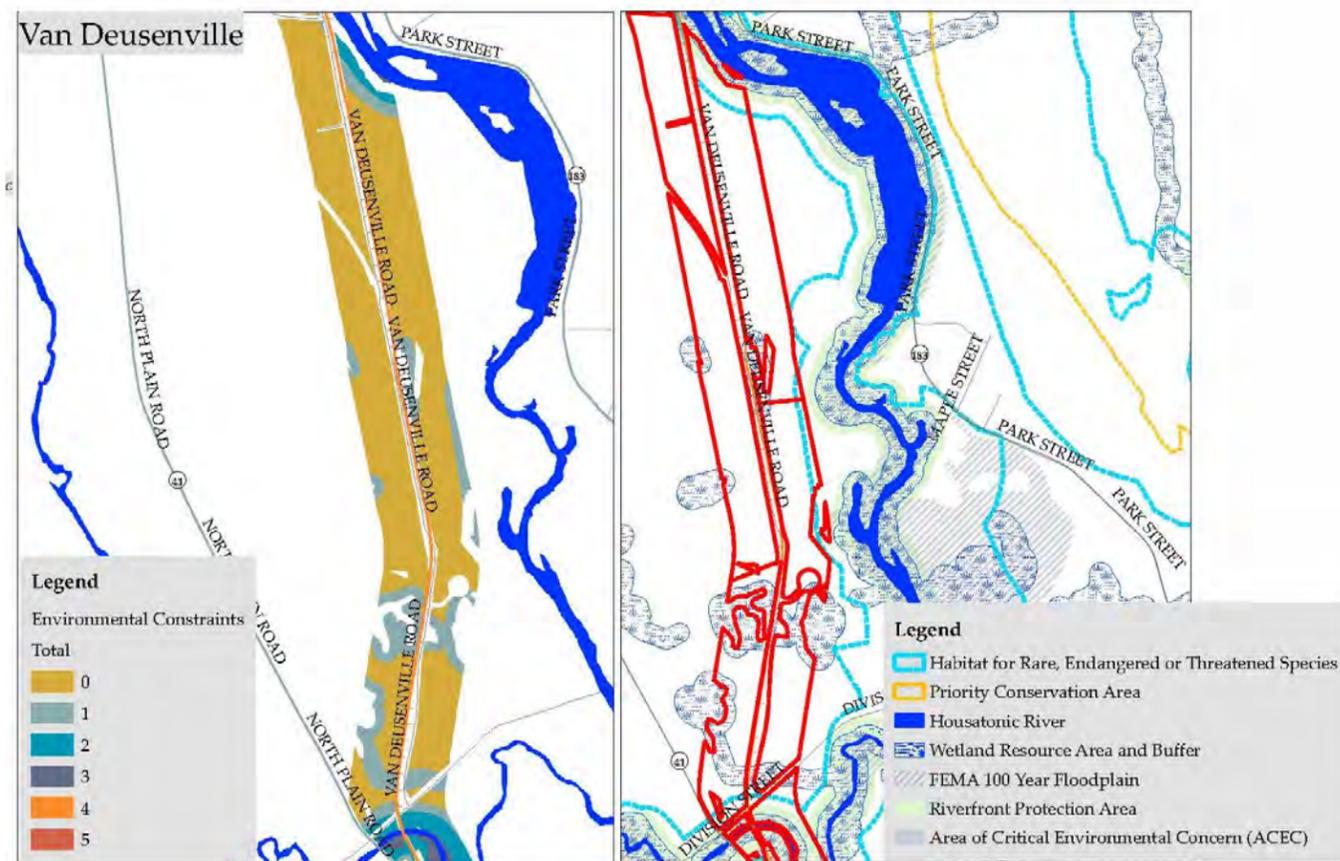
This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area with no commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Van Deusenville Road with Route 41 at the southern end of this target area. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at supporting the downtown area and Housatonic Village. The low density residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small portions of this target area are located in Habitat for Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer. Most of the land within this target area has no environmental constraints.

4 - North Plain: Pearl, Welcome, George:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area with no commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 41. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at supporting the downtown area and Housatonic Village. The low density residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small portions of this target area are located in Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.

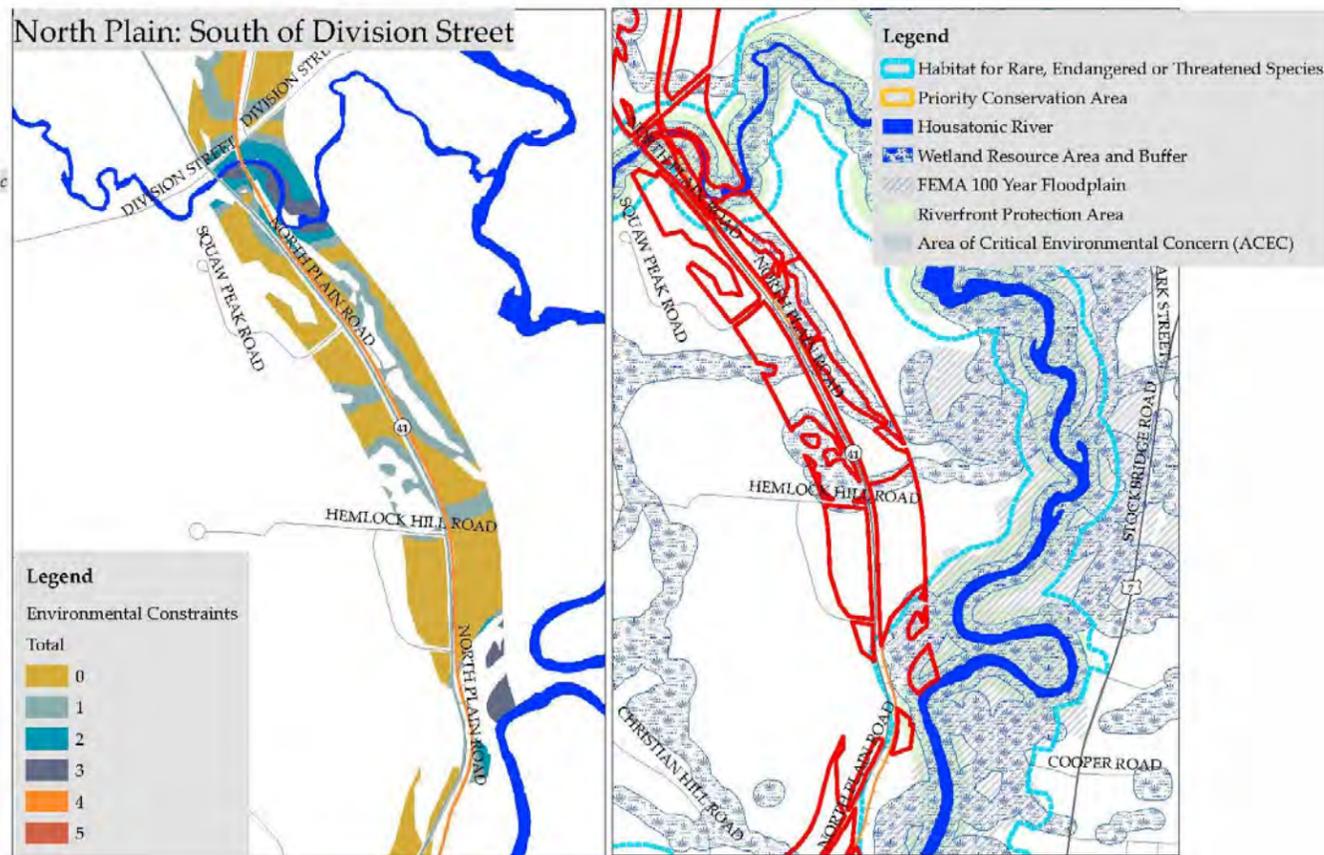


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

5 - North Plain: South of Division Street:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area with no commercial activity. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 41. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

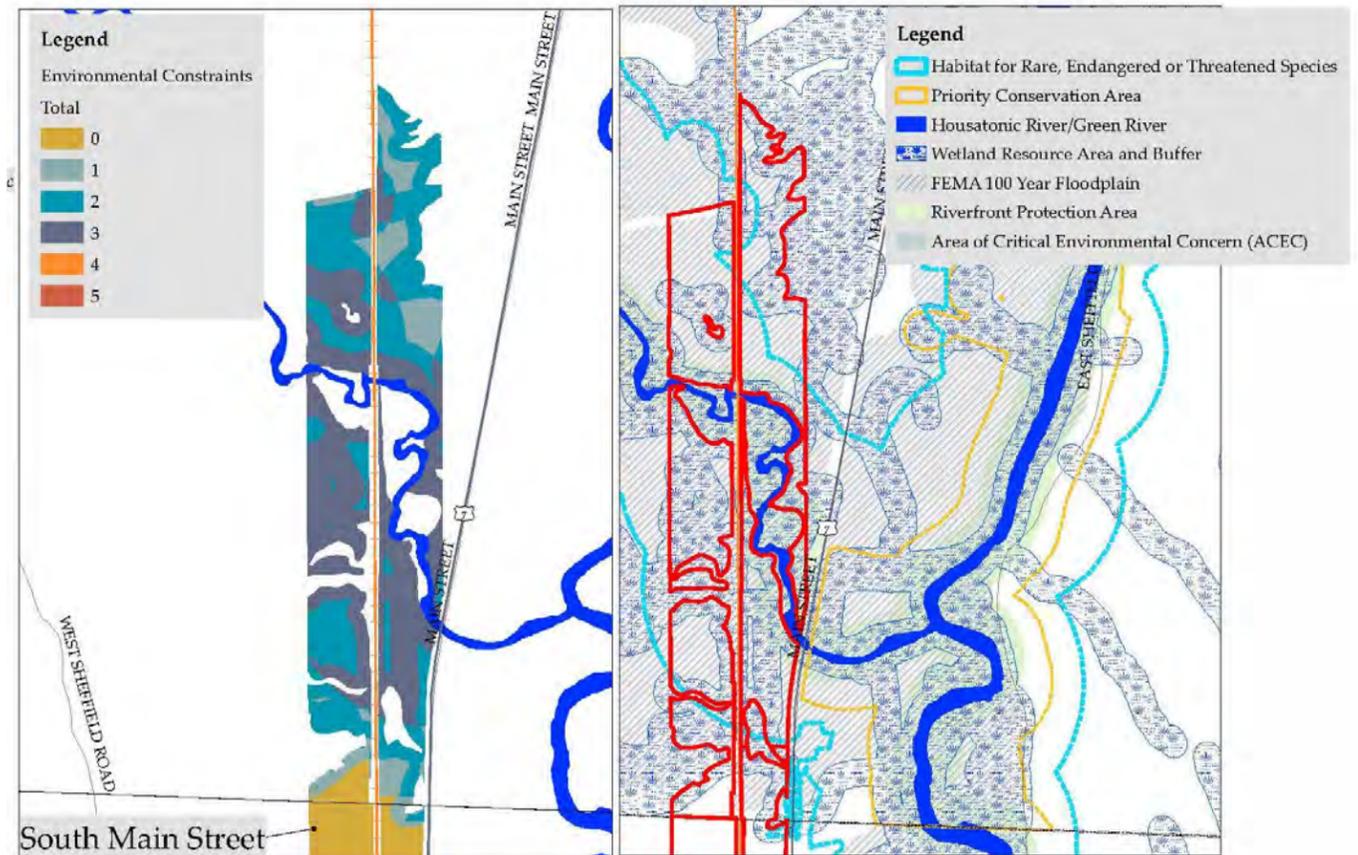
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at supporting the downtown area and Housatonic Village. The low density residential nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Small areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.



6 - South Main Street:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density commercial area along Route 7. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 7. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at supporting the downtown area and Housatonic Village. Despite its location along Route 7, the low density commercial nature of the target area is not compatible with a passenger rail station. Most of the land in this target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Sheffield

Summary of the Results of the Comparative Analysis for the Sheffield Target Areas

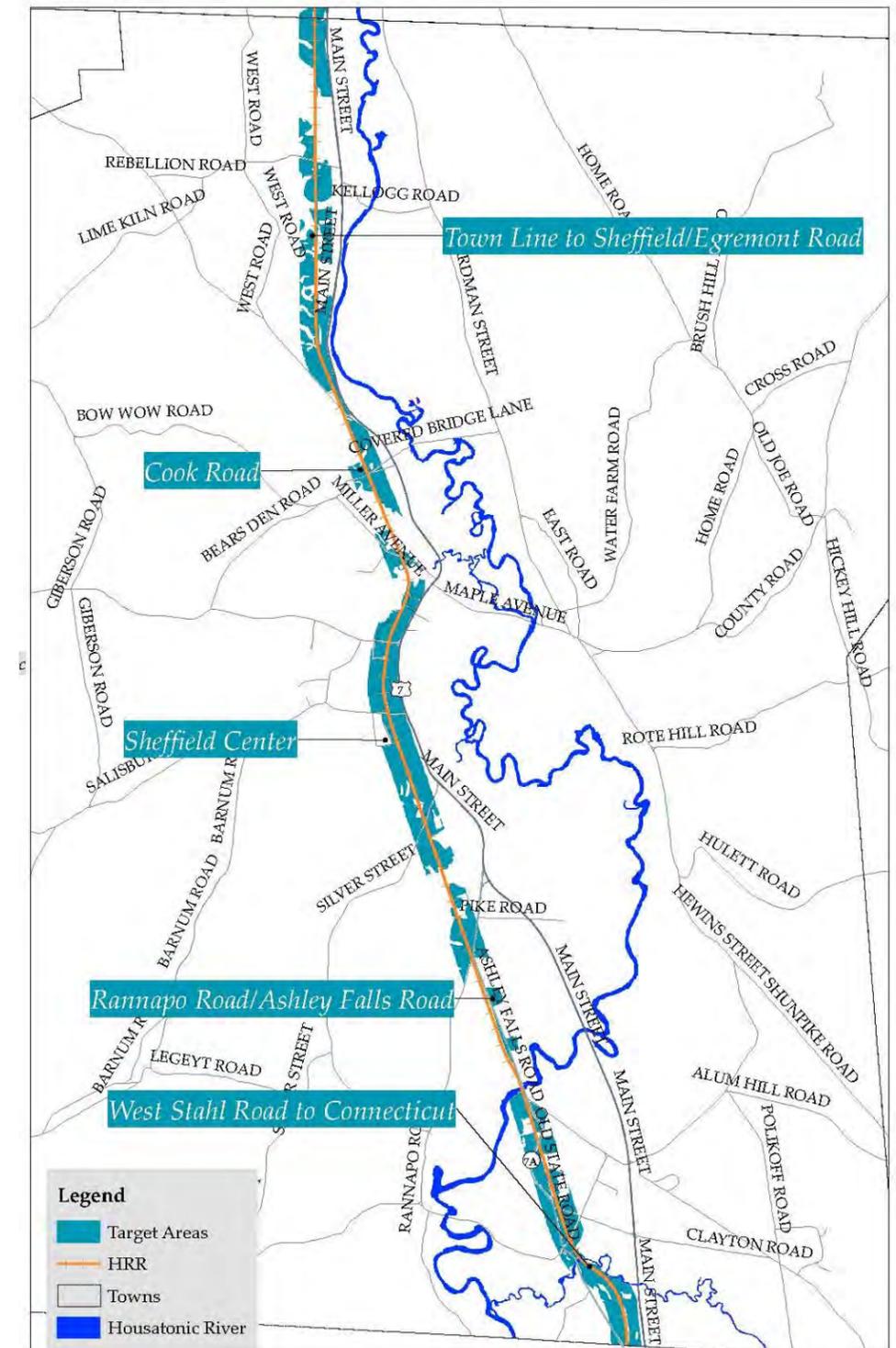
The 2006 Sheffield Master Plan supports appropriate economic development within the town center. A passenger rail station located in Sheffield Center with commercial activity, pedestrian, bicycle and automobile connectivity and its compatibility with community planning efforts would provide the greatest benefit to the town. The remaining four target areas received a poor rating because of their lack of commercial activity, poor connectivity and their incompatibility with community development efforts and surrounding land uses.

Table 4.13: Sheffield Target Area Rankings

Target Area	Overall Conformance with Local Needs	Maximizes Economic Impact	Maximizes Access & Connectivity	Complements Community Planning Efforts	Fits with the Character of the Community	Avoids/Minimizes Environmental Impacts
Sheffield Center	Excellent	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
West Stahl Road to Connecticut	Poor	NO	NO	PARTIAL	NO	NO
Cook Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Town Line to Sheffield-Egremont Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Rannapo Road/Ashley Falls Road	Poor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

See Appendix A for the detailed analysis.

Map 4.8: Sheffield Target Areas



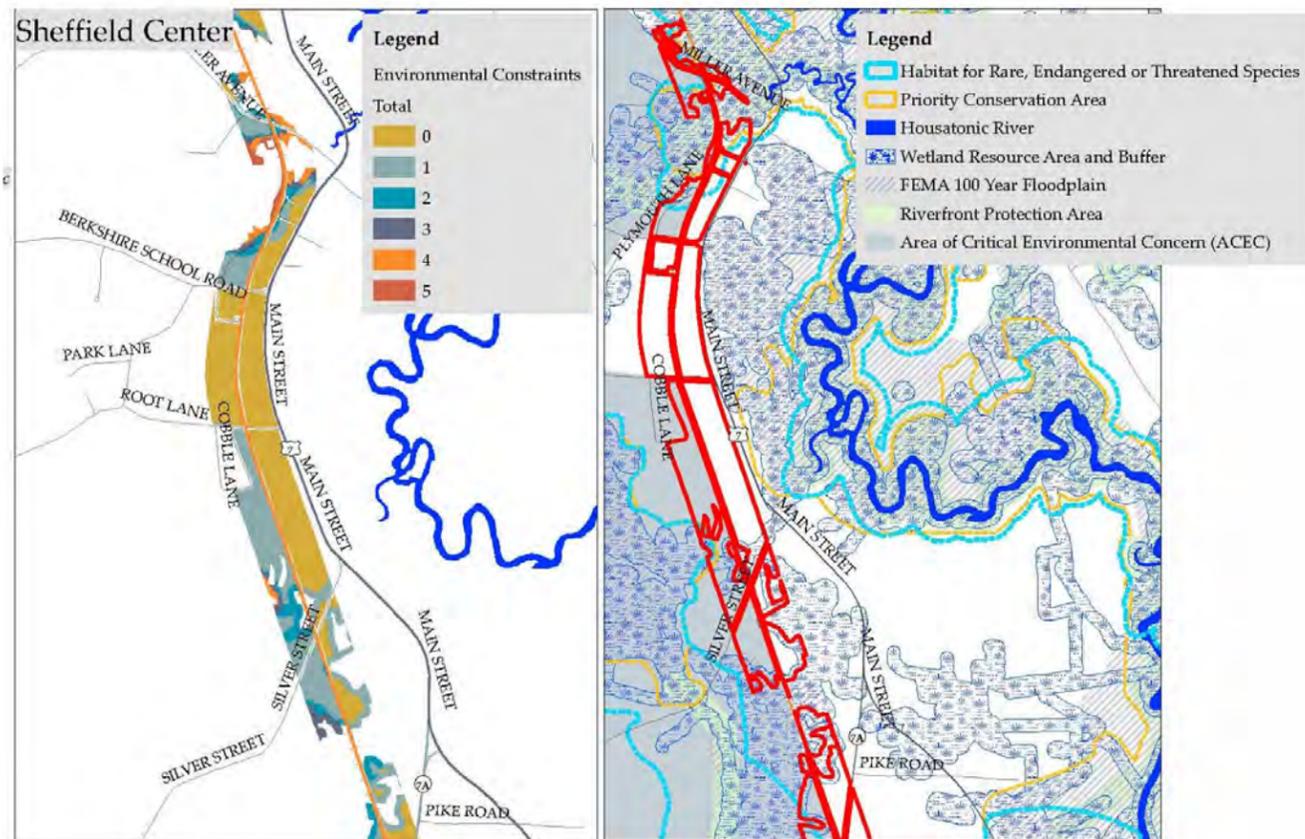
4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Narratives:

1 - Sheffield Center:

This target area is conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station due to the commercial establishments and residential population in the center of the town. The commercial establishments in the town center would benefit from additional people frequenting the center of town. Pedestrian and bicycling connections exist, but could use improvements to ensure pedestrian and bicycling safety. Automobile connections to the surrounding areas are good with Route 7 serving the center of town. The target area is not located on a public bus route. This target area is very conducive to facilitating the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel.

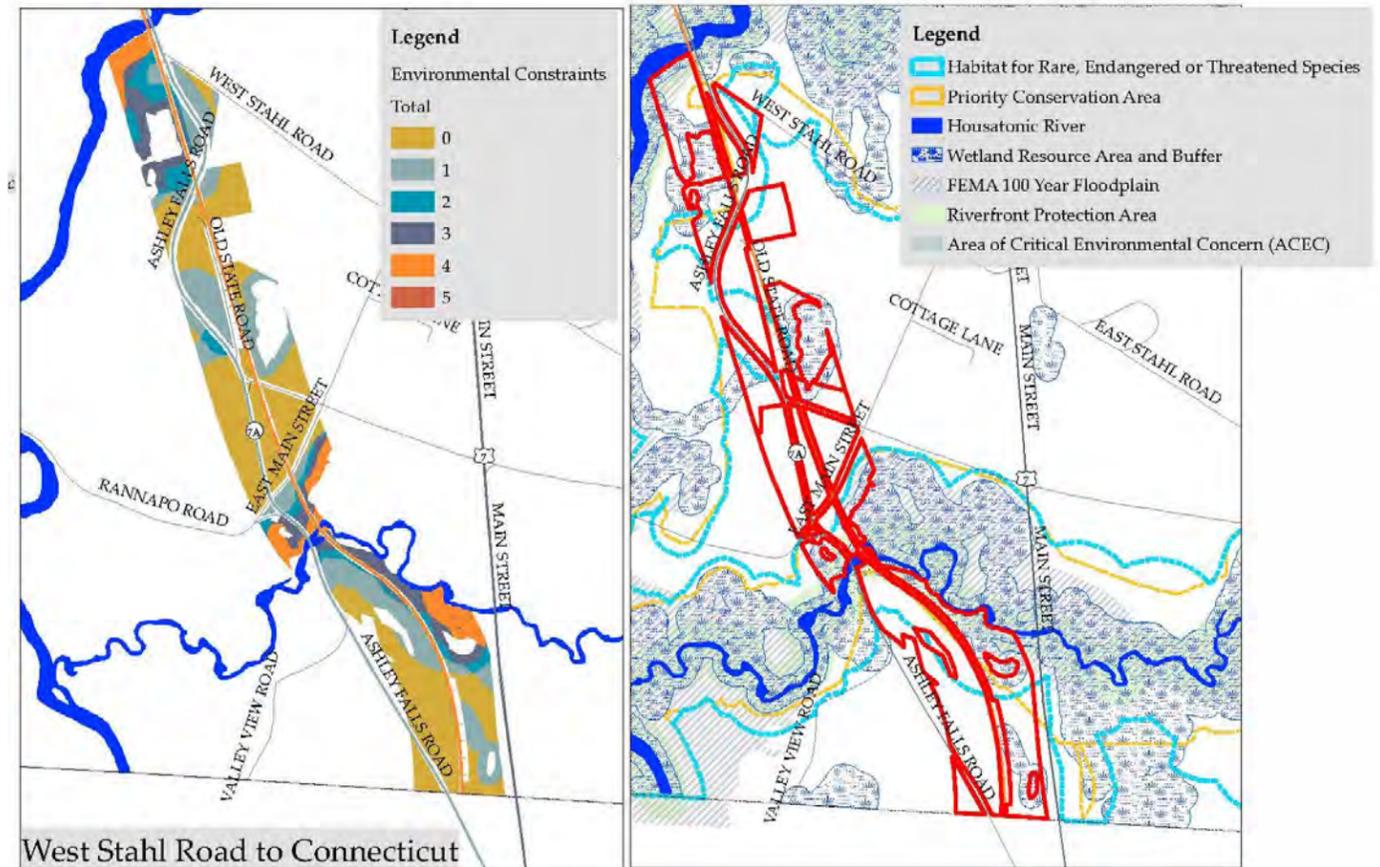
The use of this target area as a passenger rail station complements the town's planning efforts to bring appropriate economic development to the center of town. (2006 Sheffield Master Plan). A passenger rail station in this target area would fit with the mixed use nature of the town center and would be compatible with the surrounding land uses although caution should be exercised to ensure that the residential areas of the town center are protected. Areas of this target area are located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species and/or the Schenob Brook ACEC. Most of the land within this target area has zero environmental constraints.



2 - West Stahl Road to Connecticut:

This target area includes the small residential village of Ashley Falls. This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area (except for the cluster of houses in the village) along Route 7. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 7. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station partially complements the town's community development efforts aimed at encouraging mixed use development in Ashley Falls (2006 Sheffield Master Plan). The residential nature of the village and the remaining areas are not compatible with a passenger rail station. Despite its location along Route 7, the low density residential nature of the target area is not ideal for a passenger rail station. Most of the land in this target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

3 - Cook Road:

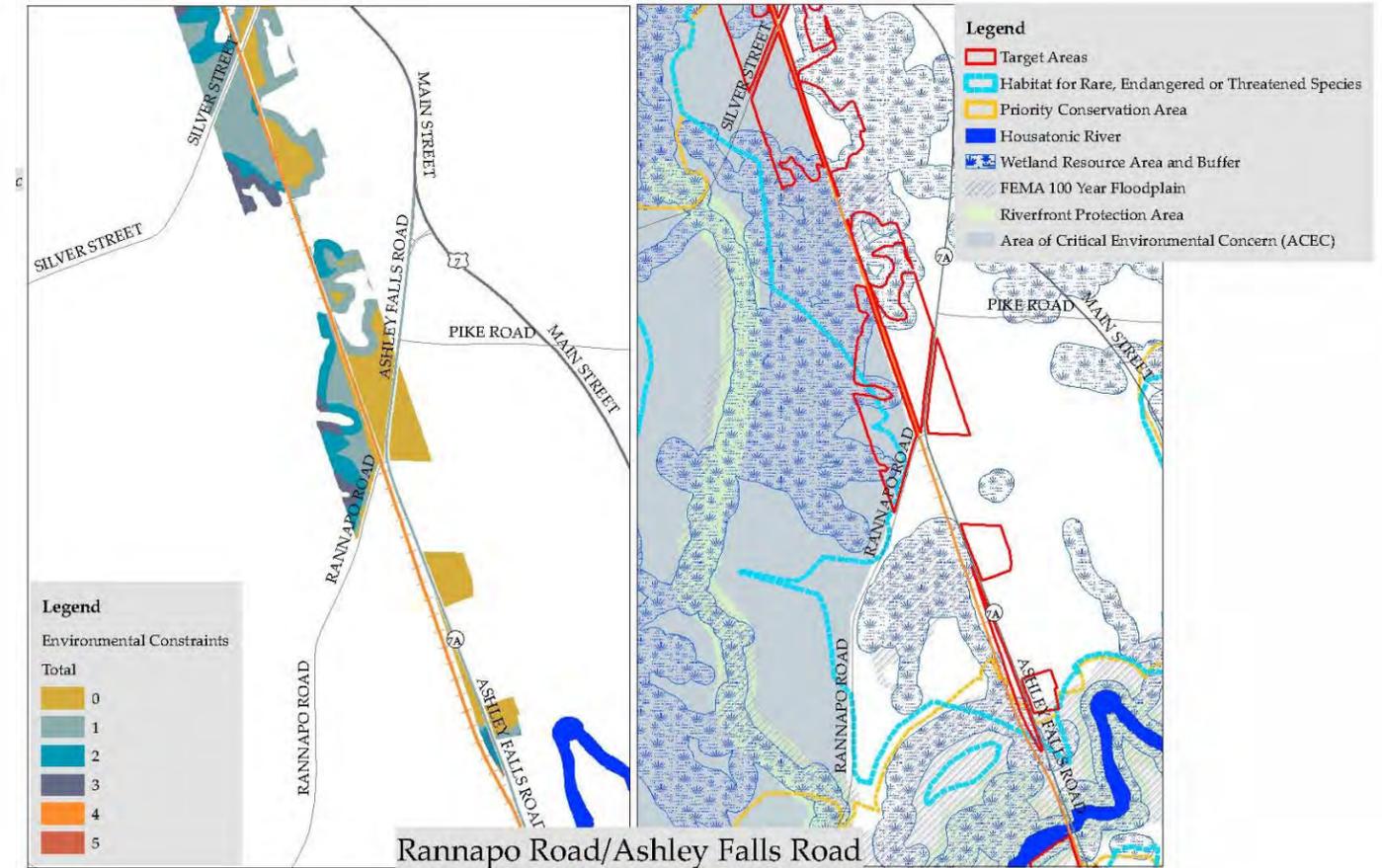
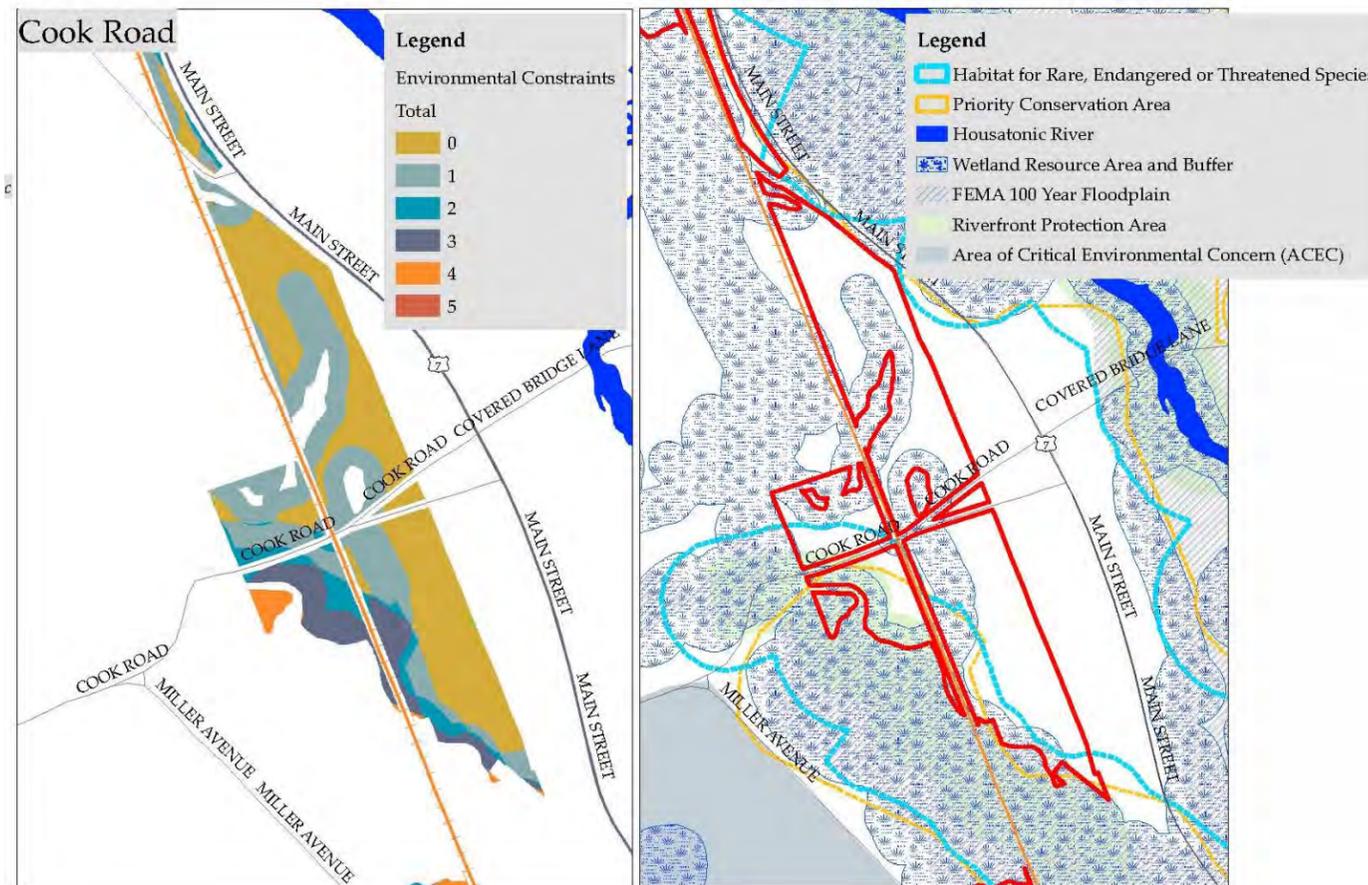
This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is mostly residential uses with a few commercial uses along Route 7. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 7. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at encouraging appropriate economic development in the town center and mixed use development in Ashley Falls (2006 Sheffield Master Plan). The predominantly low density residential nature of this target area with several commercial uses is not compatible with a passenger rail station. If this area is selected caution must be exercised to protect the residential uses. Much of the land in this target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

4 - Rannapo Road/Ashley Falls Road:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area is a low density residential area along Route 7A. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target area are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 7A. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complement the town's community development efforts aimed at encouraging appropriate economic development in the town center and mixed use development in Ashley Falls (2006 Sheffield Master Plan). The low density residential nature of the target area is not ideal for a passenger rail station. Most of the land in this target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.

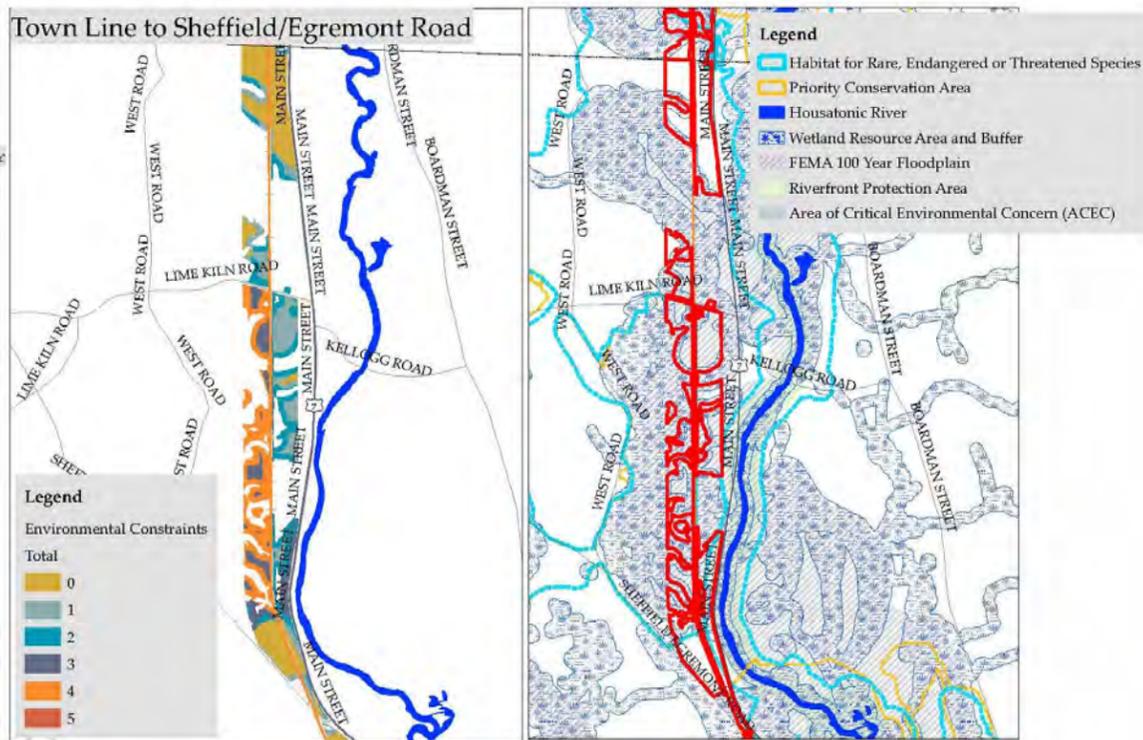


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

5 - Town Line to Sheffield-Egremont Road:

This target area is not conducive to maximizing the economic impact of a passenger rail station. This target area has mostly low density commercial uses along Route 7 with a small number of residential uses. Pedestrian and bicycling connections in this target are not well developed and the automobile connection from the target area is on Route 7. The target area is not located on a BRTA public bus route.

The use of this target area as a passenger rail station does not complements the town's community development efforts aimed at encouraging appropriate economic development in the town center (2006 Sheffield Master Plan). The low density commercial uses with a few residential uses in this target area are not compatible with a passenger rail station. If this area is selected caution must be exercised to protect the residential uses. Most of the land in this target area is located within one or more of the following: a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species.



Tier 3 – Operational & Regional Needs and Target Areas

The ideal passenger rail station site will not only meet the needs of the local community assessed in Tier 2, but it will also meet the needs of the region and the proposed passenger rail service. In particular, the needs of the region and the proposed service will inform the decision as to the number of initial passenger rail stations and their locations in the region. To determine which of the twenty-eight target (28) areas will best serve the region and the proposed service, the following evaluation criteria were developed and used to analyze the target areas.

Table 4.14: Tier 3 Operational & Regional Needs Evaluation Criteria

1. A station shall be located at the northern terminus of the rail corridor.
2. Stations shall be located in proximity to the most densely populated areas.
3. Stations shall be located in close proximity to one or more state # highways.
4. Stations shall be located to provide riders with easy access to the most frequented tourist accommodations/attractions.
5. The ideal minimum distance between stations shall be at least ten (10) miles.

Rationale for Tier 3 Operational & Regional Needs

Criterion 1: A passenger rail station shall be located at the northern terminus of the Berkshire Line.

A station located at the northern terminus of the Berkshire Line will provide residents living in northern Berkshire County and north central Berkshire County with easy access to the proposed service.

Criterion 2: Passenger rail stations shall be located in proximity to the most densely populated areas in the region along the Berkshire Line.

Passenger rail stations shall be located to serve the greatest number of people. Passenger rail stations located near areas of high population density reduce the trip length to the passenger rail station for the greatest number of people and encourage walking and biking to the passenger rail station.

Criterion 3: Passenger rail stations shall be located in proximity to one or more state # highways.

Berkshire County is a large geographic area with residents and cultural attractions spread out over long distances. The closer a passenger rail station is located to one or more state # highways the easier it will be for residents and visitors traveling to and from outlying areas to reach a passenger rail station and to better serve all residents/visitors.

Criterion 4: Passenger rail stations shall be located to provide riders with easy access to the most frequented tourist accommodations/attractions.

According to the Market Street Research marketing study, passengers will be using the proposed service to enjoy the region's cultural and recreational attractions. The ease of access for riders to reach their final destination is an important factor as to the financial viability of the proposed passenger rail service.

Criterion 5: The ideal minimum distance between passenger rail stations shall be at least ten (10) miles.

The shorter the distance between passenger rail stations the less efficient the proposed service becomes due to the need for the train to decelerate and accelerate to and from passenger rail stations. Short distances between passenger rail stations also increases the overall trip time that may impact the financial viability of the proposed service. HRRC recommends that stations be located at least ten (10) miles apart.

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Tier 3 Discussion of Regional and Operational Needs

Criterion 1: The northern terminus of the Berkshire Line is located in the City of Pittsfield. Further northward expansion of the proposed service to North Adams is not feasible as the north to south rail corridor has been replaced by the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail. (See map 4.9 at right)

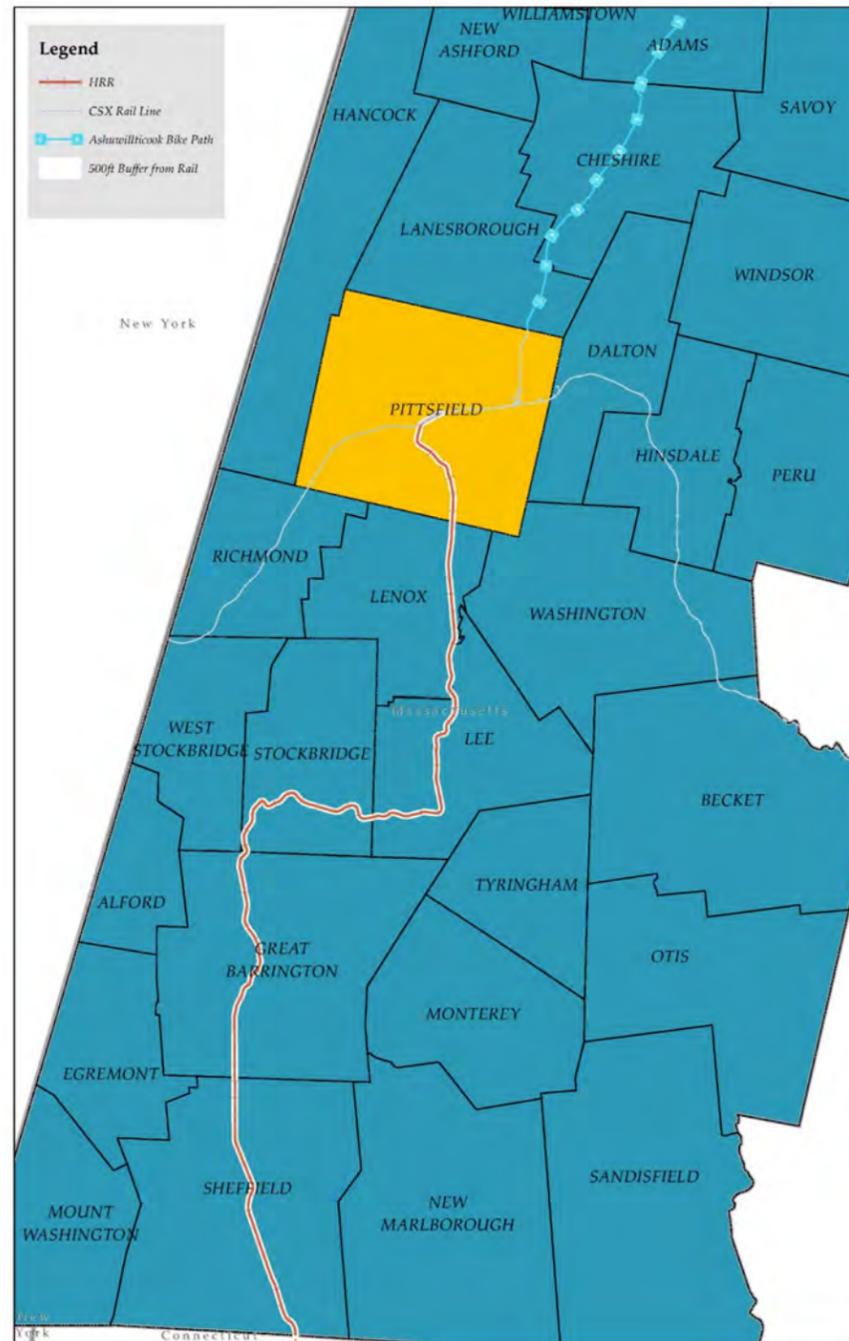
Criterion 2: The Town of Great Barrington, City of Pittsfield, and Town of Lee are the three most densely populated areas and contain the largest populations along the Berkshire Line. (See map 4.10 at right)

Criterion 3: The City of Pittsfield, the Town of Great Barrington and the Town of Lee have good connectivity with surrounding areas. The City of Pittsfield is connected to surrounding areas by Routes 7, 8, 9, and 20. The Town of Great Barrington is connected to surrounding areas by Routes 7, 23, 41, 57, 71, and 183. The Town of Lee is connected to surrounding areas by Routes 7, 20, 102 and federal interstate 90.

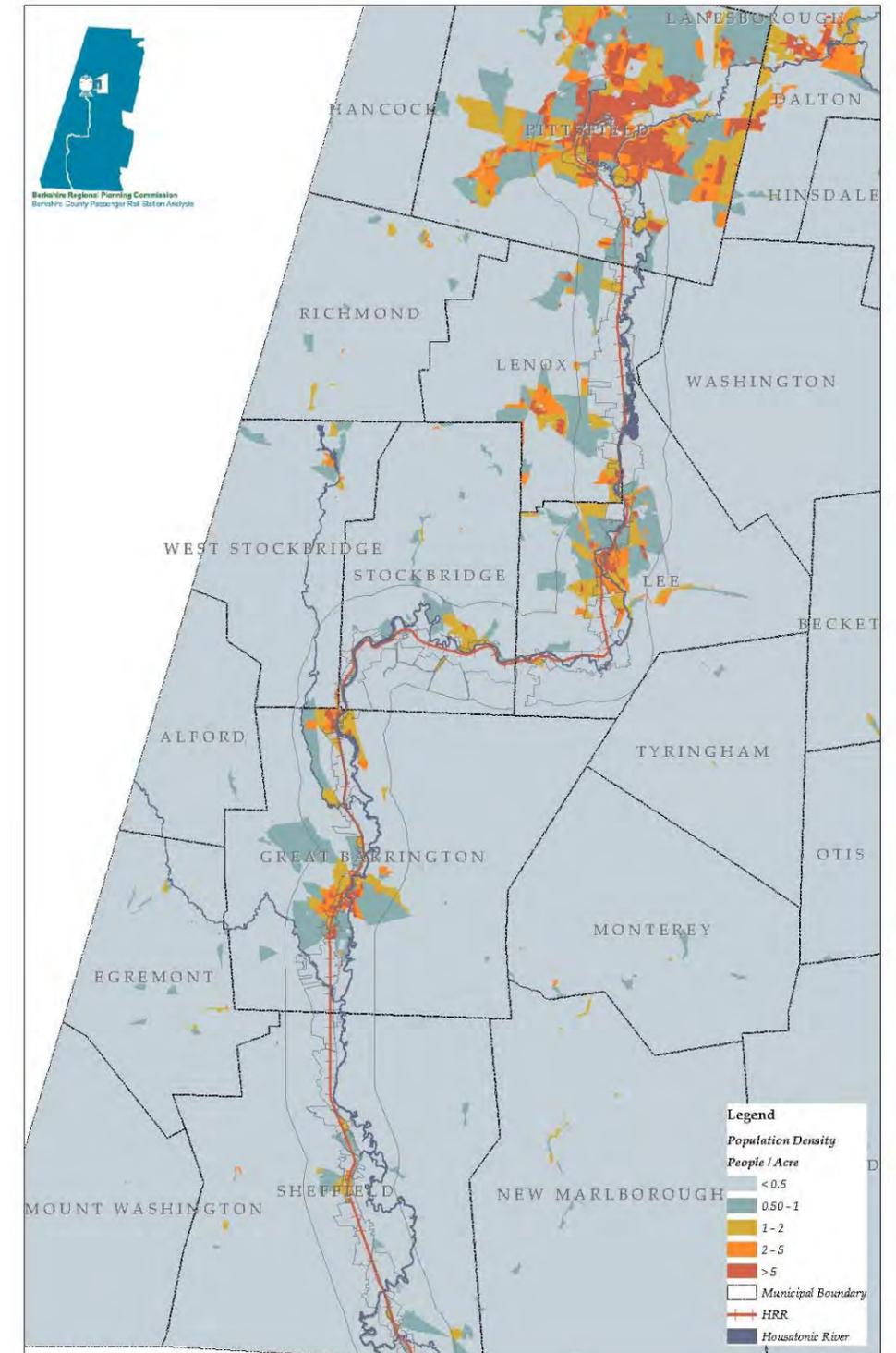
Criterion 4: A passenger rail station located in the City of Pittsfield would provide access to the attractions and accommodations in northern Berkshire County and those located in the city. A passenger rail station in the Town of Great Barrington would provide passengers with a short walk to reach the popular Mahaiwe Theatre and downtown restaurants. For the remaining communities, the distance between any cultural attractions/accommodations and the rail corridor are too far for most pedestrians. (See map 4.11 on following page)

Criterion 5: The needs of the region as defined by criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4 above, support the construction of passenger rail stations in the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Great Barrington. If a passenger rail station is located in the City of Pittsfield the entire Town of Lenox is located within 10 miles of downtown Pittsfield. If a passenger rail station is located in Great Barrington, the entire Town of Stockbridge and a significant portion of the Town of Sheffield are within ten (10) miles of downtown Great Barrington. The remaining areas not within ten miles of downtown Pittsfield or downtown Great Barrington are the Town of Lee and the southernmost portion of the Town of Sheffield. (See Map 4.12 on following page)

Map 4.9: Berkshire Line



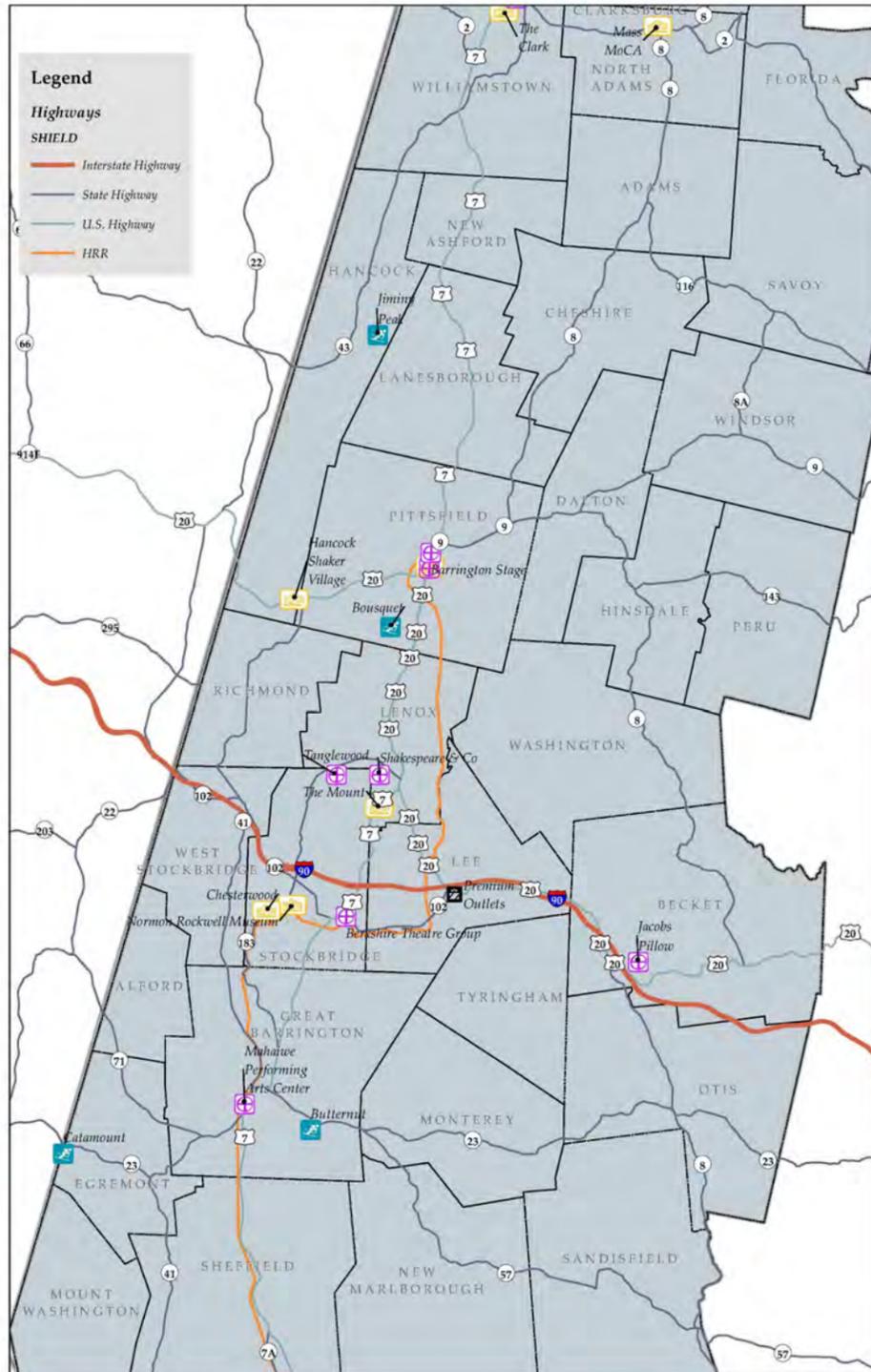
Map 4.10: Population Density



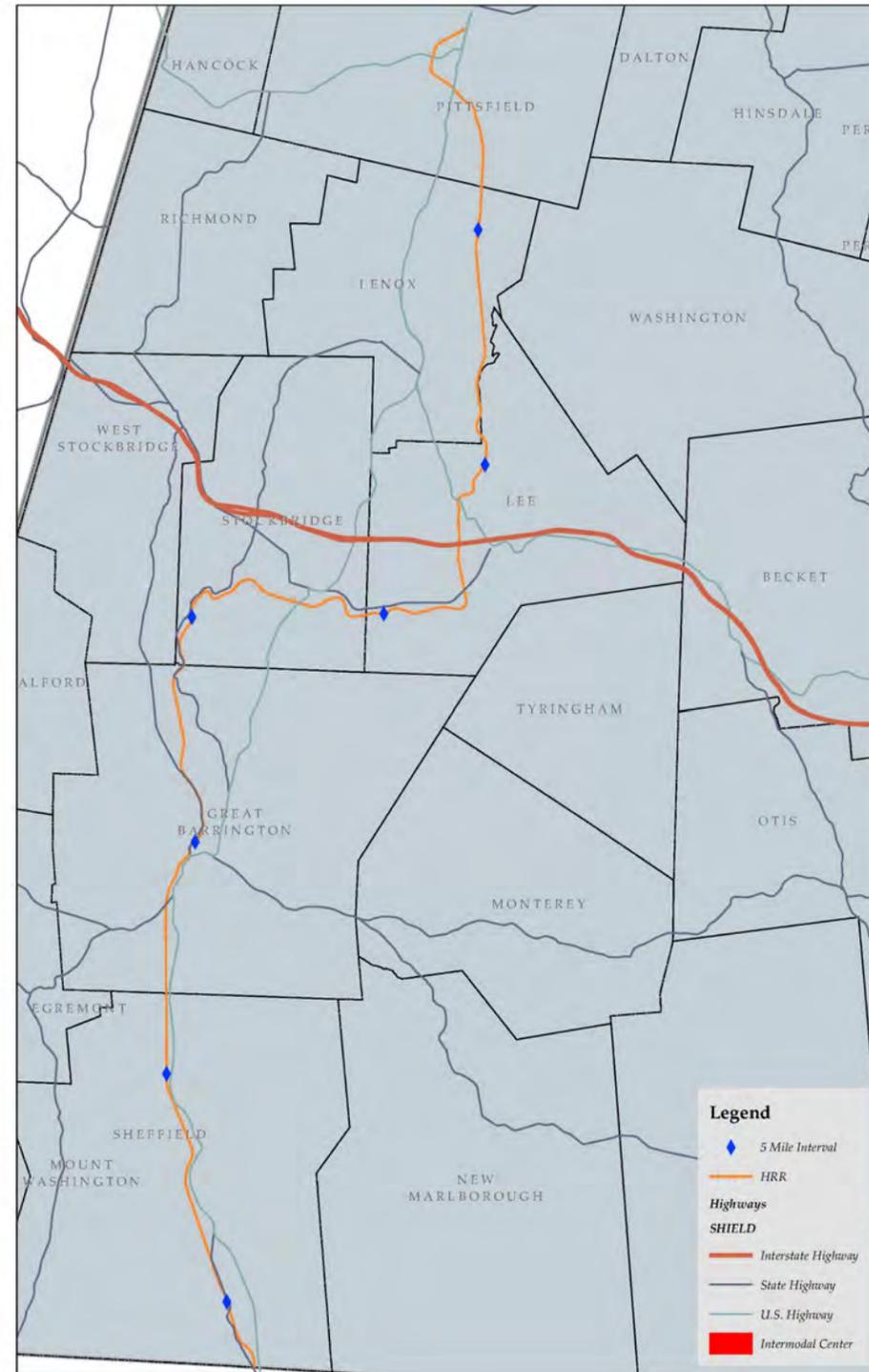


4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Map 4.11: Attractions & Accommodations



Map 4.12: Five Mile Intervals on the Berkshire Line



4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Recommendations on Initial Passenger Rail Station Locations Based on Regional and Operational Needs

Based upon the regional and operational needs identified above, initial passenger rail stations are recommended in the following municipalities as set forth in Table 4.15.

If the demand for the proposed service should increase such that additional passenger rail station locations are required in the other municipalities, we encourage the decision makers to use the target area rankings from Tier 2 as guidance as to where passenger rail stations should generally be located in the other communities.

Tier 4 – Recommendations on Station Locations

The objective of Tier 4 is to identify preferred station locations and alternatives that best serve the needs of the community, the needs of the region and the operational needs of the proposed service. In certain instances, the needs of the community or the region may conflict with the operational needs of the proposed service. In those instances, the needs of the community and the region must yield to the operational needs of the proposed service because without a financially viable and sustainable passenger rail service no one in the region will benefit.

Tier 2 of this analysis identified the target areas that best meet the needs of the communities (i.e. target areas rated as excellent, good or fair) and Tier 3 identified the municipalities that based upon the regional and operational needs should host the initial passenger rail stations. To identify the target areas for further consideration the results from Tier 2 and Tier 3 were combined. The results are provided in Table 4.16 below.

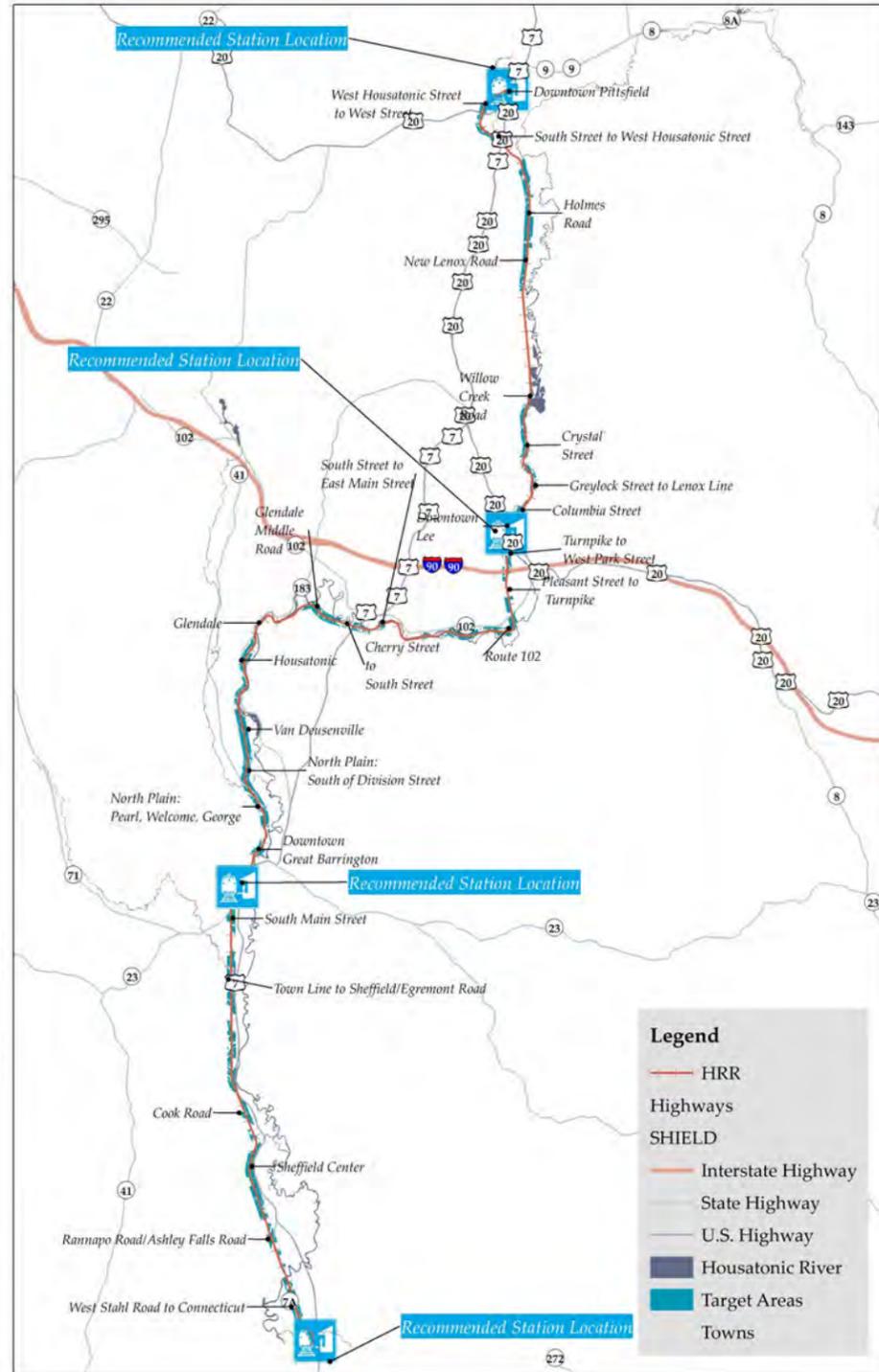
Municipality	Initial Station Location	Meets Criteria					Key - (N = No, Y = Yes, P = Partial)
		1	2	3	4	5	
City of Pittsfield	YES	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	The City of Pittsfield is an ideal location for a passenger rail station in central Berkshire County.
Town of Lenox	NO	N	N	N	Y	N	The Town of Lenox is located within ten (10) miles of the City of Pittsfield. Lenox residents could be served by the proposed stations in Pittsfield or Lee.
Town of Lee	YES	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	The Town of Lee is located at least ten (10) miles from the City of Pittsfield. Lee has excellent automobile connectivity to the surrounding areas and nearby cultural attractions.
Town of Stockbridge	NO	N	N	N	Y	N	The Town of Stockbridge is located within ten (10) miles of the Town of Great Barrington. Stockbridge residents could be served by the proposed stations in Great Barrington or Lee.
Great Barrington	YES	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	The Town of Great Barrington is an ideal location for a passenger rail station in southern Berkshire County.
Town of Sheffield	MAYBE	N	N	N	N	P	The Town of Sheffield is mostly located within ten (10) miles of the Town of Great Barrington. Sheffield residents could be well served by a passenger rail station in Great Barrington. However, the southern portion of Sheffield (Ashley Falls Village and south) could be the site of a regional passenger rail station for southern Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut. Whether a regional station at this location makes sense, depends on whether a passenger rail station is located in North Canaan, Connecticut. Passenger rail stations in the southern part of Sheffield and in North Canaan are not recommended: the two regions must coordinate on how best to serve the residents in this area with only one station.

City of Pittsfield
Downtown Pittsfield
West Housatonic Street to West Street
Town of Lee
Downtown Lee
Columbia Street
Route 102
Town of Great Barrington
Downtown Great Barrington
Housatonic
Town of Sheffield (conditional)*
West Stahl Road to Connecticut
Sheffield Center

* Note: According to Tier 2 of the analysis, a passenger rail station in the Sheffield Center target area is preferable to meet the needs of the community and this target area is analyzed for station locations; however, the operational needs of the proposed service require passenger rail stations ten (10) miles apart, assuming that a station is located in downtown Great Barrington, the preferred target area to be analyzed in the Town of Sheffield is the West Stahl Road to Connecticut target area, despite its poor rating in meeting the local needs of the community. Both target areas were analyzed for passenger rail stations.

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Map 4.13: Recommended Station Locations



The following criteria guided the investigation of the target areas identified above for passenger rail station sites in the four Berkshire Line communities recommended to host initial passenger rail stations.

- ◆ Areas of land for consideration must total approximately two (2) acres in size sufficient for station platform, amenities and parking; however, for downtown stations less acreage may be acceptable.
- ◆ Areas of land for consideration must have approximately 250' of frontage on tangent track or nearly tangent track.
- ◆ Access to the area of land is feasible.
- ◆ Areas of land with zero or one environmental constraints are viewed more favorably than sites with two or more environmental constraints.

Results of Tier 4 – Recommendations on Preferred and Alternative Station Locations

The following section contains the preferred site location and alternative site locations in each of the four Berkshire Line communities. For each of the preferred and alternative locations there is an orthophoto view of the site and a site description.

Table 4.17: Summary of Preferred and Alternative Station Locations			
	Preferred Location	Alternative Location	Alternative Location
City of Pittsfield	Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center	Hawthorne Avenue	
Town of Lee	West Side Downtown	Pleasant Street	
Town of Great Barrington	Historic Station	South Street/Maple Street	High Street/Main Street
Town of Sheffield (conditional)	State Line	Silver Street	

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

City of Pittsfield

Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

Preferred: Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center
Alternative: Hawthorne Avenue

City of Pittsfield—Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations				
Site Name	Target Area	Address	Single or Multiple Parcels	Total Area (acres)
Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center	Downtown	1 Columbus Avenue, Depot Street	Multiple	2.3
Hawthorne Avenue	West Housatonic Street to West Street	232 West Housatonic Street	Single	6.3

Descriptions of Station Locations

Preferred: Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center Location

The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center site is a 1.7 acre site located in downtown Pittsfield accessed by Columbus Avenue. The Intermodal Center serves as the hub of the Berkshire BRTA's regional bus system and as a passenger rail station on the Amtrak Lake Shore Limited Line between Boston and Chicago. This site has a small amount of on-site parking with additional parking available at two city-owned public parking garages, the Columbus Avenue parking deck and the McKay Street garage, located in close proximity to the Intermodal Center. The Intermodal Center is located on tracks owned by the CSX Railroad Company and not HRRRC. The Berkshire Line joins the CSX line approximately ½ mile to the south of the Intermodal Center. To avoid operational conflicts with CSX, HRRRC proposes to extend a separate track within the CSX right-of-way for passenger rail operations from its junction with CSX to the Intermodal Center. This proposal would necessitate that a passenger rail platform be constructed on the opposite side of the tracks as the Intermodal Center building and Amtrak platform. A newly constructed platform could be connected to the Intermodal Center building via an elevated pedestrian walkway and stairs/elevator. Connectivity to Depot Street and the McKay Street parking garage to the south would be improved by using all or a portion of a ½ acre city owned parking lot (Tax ID # H090023002) for a second station entrance and potentially a passenger pick-up and drop off area (*See orange outlined parcel on photo to the right*). No environmental constraints were identified on the site.

Alternative: Hawthorne Avenue Location

The Hawthorne Avenue site is a 6.3 acre site that is the current location of the Pittsfield Department of Public Works (DPW) yard. According to city officials, the city has no plans to move the DPW yard from the Hawthorne Avenue site. Although the site is not currently available, the 6.3 acre site has sufficient space for on-site parking and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 1,000 plus feet of track frontage is more than sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The site is located to the south of the downtown area and would not directly support the existing commercial areas in the downtown. No environmental constraints were identified on the site.



Preferred Site:
 Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center
 1 Columbus Avenue
 2.3 acres
 Parcel: H090024101
 H090023002



Alternative Site
 Hawthorne Avenue
 232 West Housatonic Street
 6.3 acres
 Parcel: G080002005

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Lee

Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

Preferred: West Side Downtown

Alternative: Pleasant Street

Town of Lee - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations				
Site Name	Target Area	Address	Single or Multiple Parcels	Total Area (acres)
West Side Downtown	Downtown	Railroad Street, Consolati Way	Multiple	TBD
Pleasant Street	Route 102	645 Pleasant Street	Single	6.5

Descriptions of Station Locations

Preferred: West Side Downtown Location

Identifying a passenger rail station site in downtown Lee is challenging; however, the potential for the passenger rail station to act as the catalyst for the redevelopment of the west side of the downtown area and the downtown area as a whole is enormous. With that in mind, the recommendation for downtown Lee must be flexible because of the challenges in siting a station in this area. The west side of downtown Lee consists of approximately twenty (20) parcels of land most under private separate ownership and containing buildings/improvements. The west side of the downtown area has been improved with a mix of uses including: residential, commercial, lumberyard, warehouse and municipal uses. Due to the existing development pattern of this small area, it is inevitable that if a passenger rail station is to be located in downtown Lee then parcel assembly and the relocation of municipal services, residences and/or businesses needs to occur. If any individuals or businesses are asked to relocate they must be compensated for the value of their property and the costs to relocate so they are made financially whole.

The ideal location for a passenger rail station in downtown Lee is on the Railroad Street side of the tracks for better pedestrian connectivity to the downtown area without the need for an elevated pedestrian walkway, at grade pedestrian crossing or underground pedestrian tunnel. The curvature of the track at the northern end of the downtown target area is not ideal for a high level boarding platform as it will increase the gap between the passenger car and the platform creating a safety hazard. In addition, locating a boarding platform at the southern or northern areas of the downtown area would likely cause the passenger trains to block streets, West Center Street (Route 20) to the north and West Park Street to the south, while stopped at the station creating traffic problems on these heavily travelled roadways. For these reasons, the central portion of the Downtown Lee target area between Sullivan Station south to the Housatonic River are the most ideal locations for a passenger rail station platform.

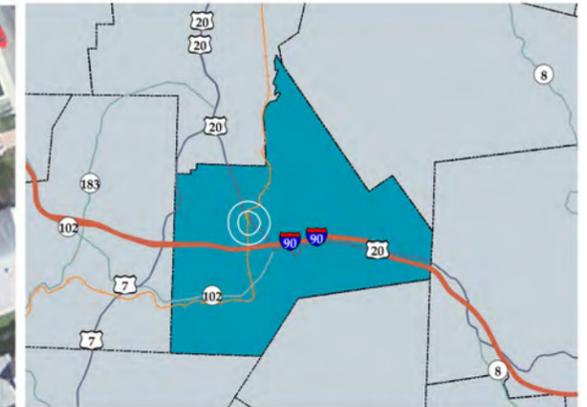
Identifying a final location in the downtown Lee area will require discussions to be held with the property owners, the town, HRRRC and MassDOT. The draft report initially identified two scenarios in downtown Lee (1) Railroad Street/Consolati Way Municipal Site and (2) Central Railroad Street Location (Parcel ID #'s: 150/12A/1060 & 150/12A/1070). At the final public meeting, the owner of the property identified as the Central Railroad Street Location expressed a desire that the property not be considered for a passenger rail station as it would have significant negative impacts on the existing business. In light of this request and the identification of the Railroad Street/Consolati Way Municipal Site as a viable option, the Central Railroad Street Location is no longer considered an option at this time and has been removed from the report.

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Preferred: Railroad Street/Consolati Way Municipal Site

This scenario would use almost all municipal property (150/18A/440, 150/18A/460, 150/18A/480, 150/18A/490, 150/18A/470) and one private property (150/18A/430) totaling 4.63 acres for a passenger rail station and on-site parking. Due to the limited amount of frontage (+/- 300') this parcel has along the rail corridor a platform at this location would not be able to serve all passenger cars on a single train. However, the site would be able to provide the greatest amount of on-site parking due to its size. HRRC has reviewed this and other downtown sites and has indicated that in order to make this site feasible it is recommended that the high level platform be extended south onto the bridge structure over the Housatonic River. There is an existing bridge structure carrying the railroad tracks that with some modifications could likely accommodate the high level platform structure. A small portion of this site is located in a FEMA 100 year floodplain and Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species. A larger portion of this site is located in Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer. A limiting factor for this scenario is that a portion of this area is currently being used as the DPW yard for the town. In prior discussions with town officials, the town may be willing to move its DPW operations if the costs and logistics of the move are in the best interests of the town. The benefit of this scenario is that it does not impact private business interests and the town may be willing to enter into negotiations about this property.

For several years, the town has been planning for the redevelopment of this area and a stand alone passenger rail station may not be the most beneficial use of the available land. Town officials expressed a desire that if a passenger rail station were to be located in this location that consideration be given to incorporating the station into a multi-use building, whether it be a commercial or mixed-use building, instead of a stand alone structure and platform.



Westside Downtown Potential Site*

Scenario 1

Target Area: Downtown Lee

18A440, 1.9 acres

18A430, .25 acre

18A460, .28 acre

18A470, .2 acre

18A480, 1 acre

18A490, 1 acre

Total acreage: 4.63 acres

Tax Map ID #	Existing Structures	Active Use	Parcel Size (acres)
150/18A/440	Yes (multiple)	Yes (DPW Yard, Municipal Offices)	1.9
150/18A/460	No	Yes (Parking)	0.28
150/18A/480	No	Yes (Parking)	1.0
150/18A/490	No	Yes (Parking)	1.0
150/18A/470	Yes	No (Vacant)	0.2
150/18A/430	Yes	Yes (Industrial)	0.25

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Alternative: Pleasant Street Location

The Pleasant Street site is a 6.5 acre site that is located off Pleasant Street (Route 102). The Town of Lee Assessor's data indicates that the site is an inactive trucking terminal. The 6.5 acre site has sufficient space for on-site parking and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 900 plus feet of track frontage is more than sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The site is located to the south of the downtown area and would not directly support the existing commercial establishments in the downtown. Two (2) environmental constraints (Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer and FEMA 100 Year Floodplain) were identified on a portion of the site all related to the Housatonic River that flows past the southern end of the site. If the site were selected as the location for a passenger rail station caution would need to be taken to avoid these sensitive environmental areas.



Alternative Site
Pleasant Street
645 Pleasant Street
6.5 acres
150030000000780

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Great Barrington

Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

Preferred: Historic Station **Alternatives:** High Street/Main Street
South Street/Maple Avenue

Town of Great Barrington - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations				
Site Name	Target Area	Address	Single or Multiple Parcels	Total Area (acres)
Historic Station	Downtown	Castle Street, Castle Lane	Multiple	3.09
South Street/Maple Avenue	Downtown	South Street, Maple Avenue	Multiple	4.42
High Street/Main Street	Downtown	High Street, Rosseter Street, Main Street, Gas House Lane	Multiple	7.95

Descriptions of Station Locations

Preferred: Historic Station Location

The Historic Station site is an approximately 1 acre site that consists of two separate parcels (Tax Map ID # 113-019-052B & 113-019-052C) that are located off Castle Street. In addition, to the two parcels that contain the historic passenger rail station, two other adjacent parcels (Tax Map ID # 113-019-052E & 113-019-052O) totaling 2.1 acres are recommended for use as on-site parking for the passenger rail station (See orange highlighted parcels in the photo to the right). These two adjacent parcels are subject to a restrictive covenant which limits the use of the parcels to residential use. The covenant would either need to be released or otherwise removed for these parcels to be used for station parking. The total area of the four recommended parcels is 3.09 acres and all of the parcels are in common ownership. The historic station building requires an in-depth analysis to determine its feasibility for use as a contemporary passenger rail station and to the extent possible the historic features of the building should be preserved in consultation with the Town of Great Barrington. The double track and 1,000 plus feet of track frontage across the four parcels is more than sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The layout of the contemporary passenger rail station on this site should consider the residential neighborhood to the west on Castle Hill. To improve traffic flow through the site and to lessen traffic impacts on Castle Street, a one way traffic pattern is suggested that has vehicles entering the site via Taconic Avenue and Castle Street and exiting the site at the north end onto Railroad Avenue and Rosseter Street (or possibly creating a new at grade crossing over to Railroad Street and Elm Street to avoid impacts to residences on Railroad Avenue). No environmental constraints were identified on the four parcels.

Alternative: South Street/Maple Avenue (Route 23) Location

This area is located to the south of the downtown area and consists of two potential locations. The South Street site is a 2.39 acre parcel (Tax Map ID # 113-021-0090) that has sufficient space for on-site parking and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 650 plus feet of track frontage is sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The site is located to the south of the downtown area and would not directly support the existing commercial establishments in the downtown. A business currently occupies the site so the availability of the site would need to be explored further. The second location in this area, the Maple Avenue site is a 2.03 acre site that consists of three separate parcels (Tax Map ID # 113-022-0410, 113-022-041A, 113-022-041C) and has sufficient space for on-site parking and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 650 plus feet of track frontage is sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The site is located to the south of the downtown area and would not directly support the existing commercial establishments in the downtown. A business currently occupies the site so the availability of the site would need to be explored further. No environmental constraints were identified at either location.



Preferred Site
Historic Station
Castle Street, Castle Lane
3.09 acres
1130110000052B
1130100000052C
1130100000052E



Alternative Site
South Street/Maple Avenue
4.42 acres
M_45830_883768
1120220000000410
112022000000041C
112022000000041A
1120220000000420

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Alternative: High Street/Main Street Location

This area is located on the northern side of downtown Great Barrington and consists of approximately ten (10) parcels totaling approximately 5.3 acres. This area is a mix of industrial and commercial uses that are not typically considered the highest and best use for mixed use downtown areas. Although there is considerable track frontage in this area, HRRC indicates that the track curvature through some parts of this area could be problematic for the construction of a high level platform. Nonetheless, this area is a good alternative to be explored if the historic station is not selected. If the nearby historic station site is selected the Town is encouraged to consider how this area might be redeveloped as a residential/commercial mixed use area and/or how it could provide additional parking for the historic station site. No environmental constraints were identified in this location.



Alternative Site
High Street/Main Street
High Street, Rosseter Street, Main Street,
Gas House Lane
7.95 acres
11301400000320
113014000001740
113014000000730
113014000000710
113014000000750
113014000001780
113014000001820
11301400000182A

4. STATION LOCATION ANALYSIS

Town of Sheffield

Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

Preferred: State Line
Alternatives: Silver Street

Town of Sheffield - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations				
Site Name	Target Area	Address	Single or Multiple Parcels	Total Area (acres)
State Line	West Stahl Road to State Line	0 State Road	Single	10
Silver Street	Sheffield Center	414 South Main Street	Single	16.5

Descriptions of Station Locations

Preferred: State Line Location

The State Line site is a 10 acre site that is located off Route 7 with portions of the site located in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The 10 acre site has sufficient space for a large parking area to function as a regional station and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 1,500 plus feet of track frontage is more than sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. The site is located at the southern end of Sheffield and would not directly support the small number of local businesses in the center of Sheffield. Three (3) environmental constraints (Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species, and NHESP Priority Conservation Area) were identified on the site, with the NHESP Priority Conservation Area and Habitat of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern Species occupying a very small portion of the northern tip of the site. If the site is selected as the location for a passenger rail station caution would need to be taken to avoid these sensitive environmental areas. Any passenger rail station located at this site is anticipated to function as a regional station.

Alternatives: Silver Street Location

The Silver Street site is a 16.5 acre site that is located near the intersection of Silver Street and Route 7 south of the center of Sheffield. The 16.5 acre site has sufficient space for on-site parking and ample room for a passenger rail station. The 1,500 plus feet of track frontage is more than sufficient for the construction of a passenger rail station platform. If this location is selected as the location for a passenger rail station, the western portion of the 16.5 acre parcel should be split off from the larger parcel to allow for the construction of the passenger rail station and on-site parking. Locating the passenger rail station on the western portion of the property provides protection to the existing dwelling located on the eastern portion of the parcel adjacent to Route 7. The large site has an existing dwelling so its availability would need to be explored further. One environmental constraint (Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer) was identified on the site and caution should be exercised to avoid this sensitive environmental area. This site does not meet the ideal ten (10) mile separation between stations if a passenger rail station is constructed in downtown Great Barrington, as it is only 7.2 miles south of the historic Great Barrington station.



Preferred Site
 State Line
 0 State Road
 10 acres
 2670060000100010



Alternative Site
 Silver Street
 414 South Main Street
 16.5 acres
 M_46782_873271



5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Environmental Analysis of Target Areas and Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

The Housatonic River watershed through which the Berkshire Line passes is an area of great biodiversity, fragile ecosystems and home to a number of endangered, threatened, and special concern species. While the long term environmental benefits of the proposed service are projected to be great, best practices for the construction and maintenance of the passenger rail stations and the right-of-way should be followed to avoid and minimize local environmental impacts.

The protection of sensitive environmental areas is a recurring theme throughout the passenger rail station location analysis. In Tier 1 of the analysis, all wetland resource areas and land with a slope over 15% were automatically excluded from consideration as a passenger rail station location. In Tier 2 of the analysis the number of environmental constraints on a target area was one of the criteria used to rank the target areas and later in Tier 4 the existence of environmental constraints on potential passenger rail station sites are also considered. In Tier 2 the target areas with multiple environmental constraints were viewed less favorably than those with no environmental constraints. This environmental constraints analysis provided the information for the Tier 2 and Tier 4 analyses discussed earlier.

Environmental Constraints Analysis

The twenty-eight (28) target areas identified after Tier 1 of the station location analysis were screened to determine if environmental constraints

were present in those target areas. The existence of an environmental constraint on a target area or a passenger rail station location should not be interpreted to automatically preclude consideration of the target area, but to identify areas to avoid or where additional measures should be taken to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Using the state GIS database, the following environmental constraints were mapped in the twenty-eight (28) target areas. (See table 5.1.)

Table 5.1: Environmental Constraints
Riverfront Protection Areas/Wetland Buffer
100 Year Floodplain
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species
NHESP Housatonic Watershed Priority Conservation Areas

Importance of Environmental Features

Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer

As opposed to the wetland resource area itself this criteria identifies the 100' wetland buffer area and 200' riverfront protection area that is under the jurisdiction of the local Conservation Commissions and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). These buffer areas play an important role in protecting water quality and providing wildlife habitat. Although development in these buffer areas are not precluded as a matter of law the important purposes they serve must be considered when selecting a location for a passenger rail station.

100 Year Floodplain Area

By definition areas designated as a 100 year floodplain will be subject to flooding an average of once

every 100 years. If climate change predictions are accurate, the frequency and intensity of storms in the region are likely to increase resulting in increased episodes of flooding and property damage. The long term cost savings of avoiding repetitive damage to passenger rail stations and other personal property is an important factor to consider when selecting a location for a passenger rail station. Additionally, due to floodplain compensation requirements, development in a floodplain area, while not prohibited, is more expensive.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are areas of land designated as such because of the quality, uniqueness, and significance of their natural and cultural resources. Although development in ACECs is not precluded as a matter of law the important purposes they serve must be considered when selecting a location for a passenger rail station and permitting of development will be subject to a higher level of regulatory review.

Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species

Species listed as endangered, threatened and special concern have very small populations remaining and the protection of their habitat is important to the existence of the species. Although development in these habitats is not precluded as a matter of law the important purposes they serve must be considered when selecting a location for a passenger rail station and permitting of development will be subject to a higher level of regulatory review.

NHESP Housatonic Watershed Priority Conservation Area

In July 2010, the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) undertook a large natural community survey in the Housatonic River watershed. The study identified areas within the watershed as priority conservation areas (PCA) due to the presence of endangered, threatened and special concern species and other unique and outstanding natural communities that do not occur elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Although development in these PCAs is not precluded as a matter of law the important purposes they serve must be considered when selecting a location for a passenger rail station and permitting of development will be subject to a higher level of regulatory review.



5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Results of the Environmental Constraints Analysis of the Target Areas

A discussion of the environmental constraints on each of the twenty-eight (28) target areas and relevant maps are included with the description of each target area in Tier 2 of the station location analysis located in Section 4 of this report.

The following table shows the acreage of land in the target areas that are constrained by the identified environmental constraints.

Table 5.2: Acreage of Environmental Constraints in Target Areas

Environmental Constraint	Acreage
Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer	1,651
100 Year Floodplain	392
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)(2) <i>Upper Housatonic River ACEC, Schenob Brook Drainage Basin ACEC</i>	382
Habitat of Endangered, Threatened & Special Concern Species	1,203
Priority Conservation Areas (13)	140
<i>Source: MA GIS Database</i>	

Overall, the largest environmental constraint is Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer with over 50% of the land within the target area identified as within this sensitive environmental area.

The result is not surprising as the Berkshire Line closely follows the Housatonic River beginning in Stockbridge northward. The table below shows the acreage of land in the target areas that are constrained by between one and five total environmental constraints.

Table 5.3: Acreage of the Total Number of Environmental Constraints in Target Areas

# of Environmental Constraints	Acreage
0	843
1	531
2	230
3	201
4	65
5	16
<i>Source: MA GIS Database</i>	

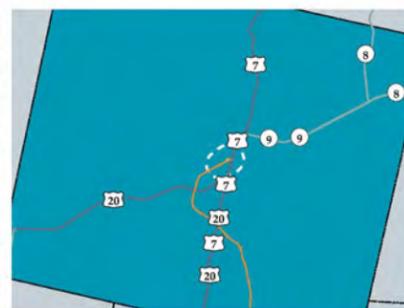
The total number of environmental constraints in each target areas served as the basis to determine the significance of environmental impacts in Tier 2 of the station location analysis. The target areas with a greater number of environmental constraints are viewed less favorably for potential passenger rail station locations than those with no environmental constraints.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Results of the Environmental Constraints Analysis of the Preferred and Alternative Passenger Rail Station Locations

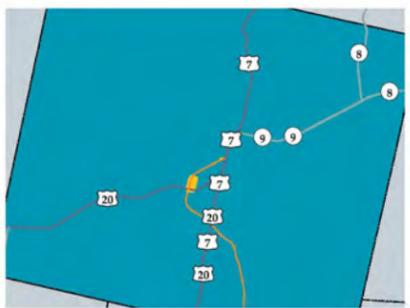
The environmental constraints analysis identified the following environmental constraints on the preferred passenger rail station sites and the alternatives (Alt) sites.

City of Pittsfield - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations	
Site Name	Environmental Constraints
Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center	No environmental constraints were identified at this location
Hawthorne Avenue (Alt)	No environmental constraints were identified at this location



Legend
 Intermodal Center
 Depot Street Parking Lot

Environmental Constraints
 Preferred Site 1:
 Intermodal Center
 Columbus Avenue
 2.3 acres
 H090024101



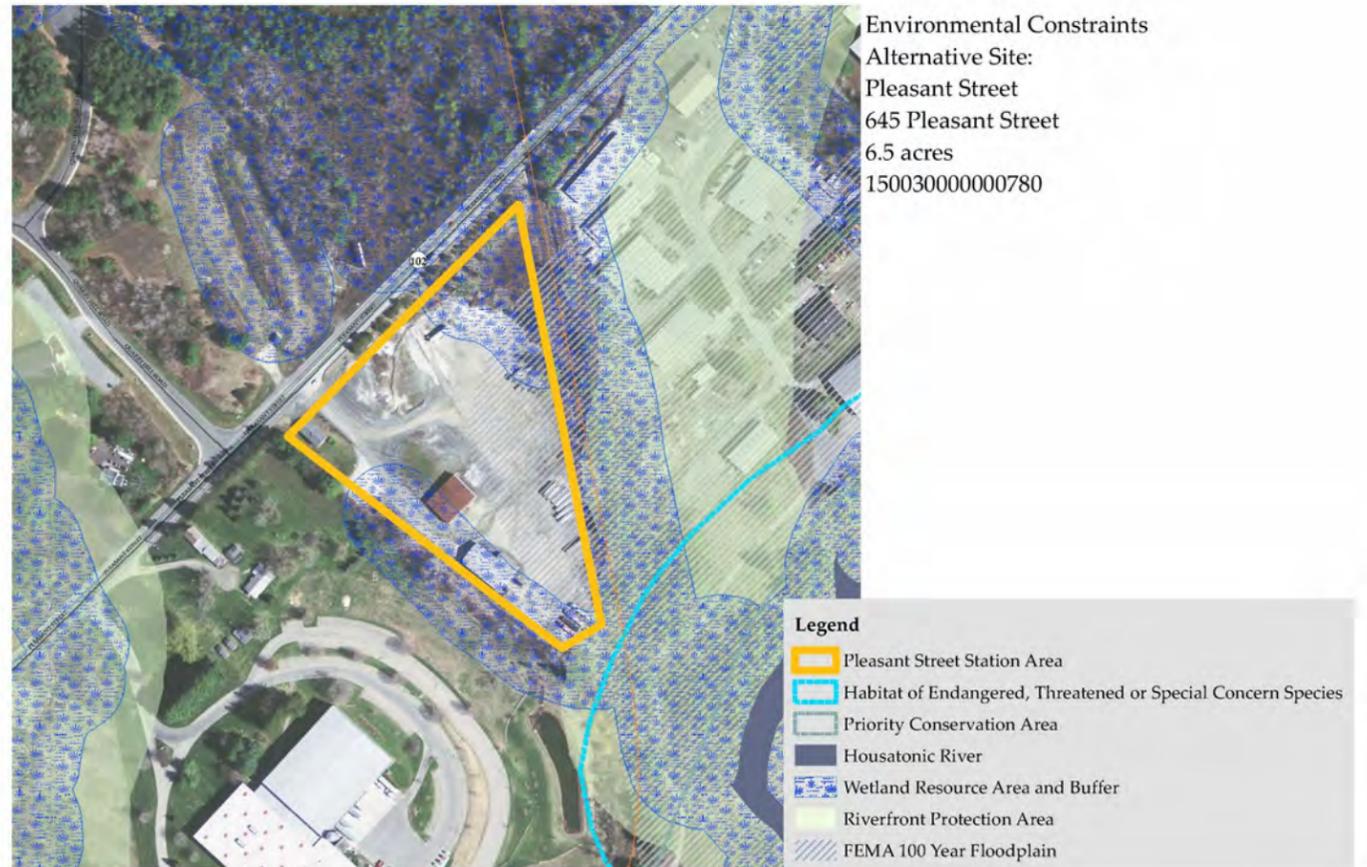
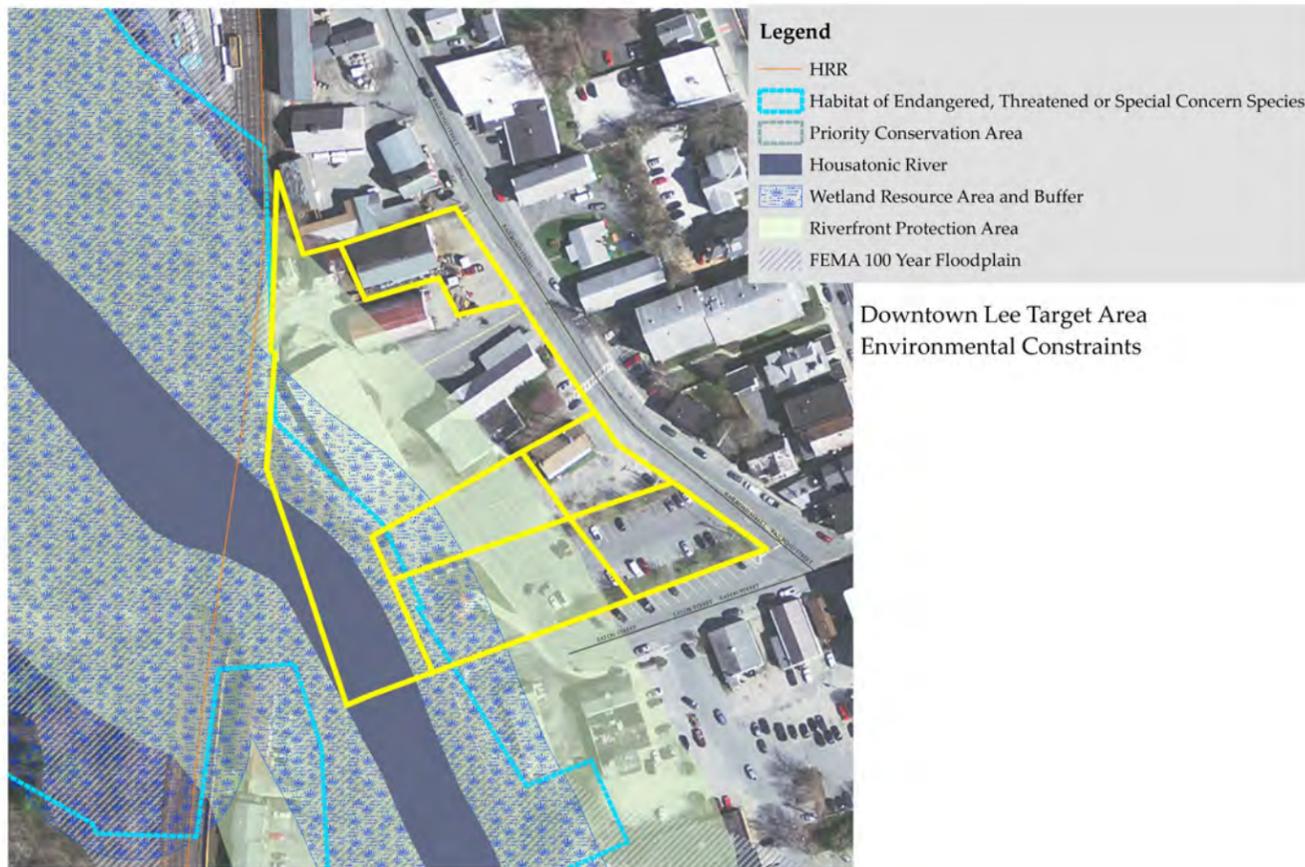
Legend
 Hawthorne Avenue

Environmental Constraints
 Alternative Site:
 Hawthorne Avenue

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

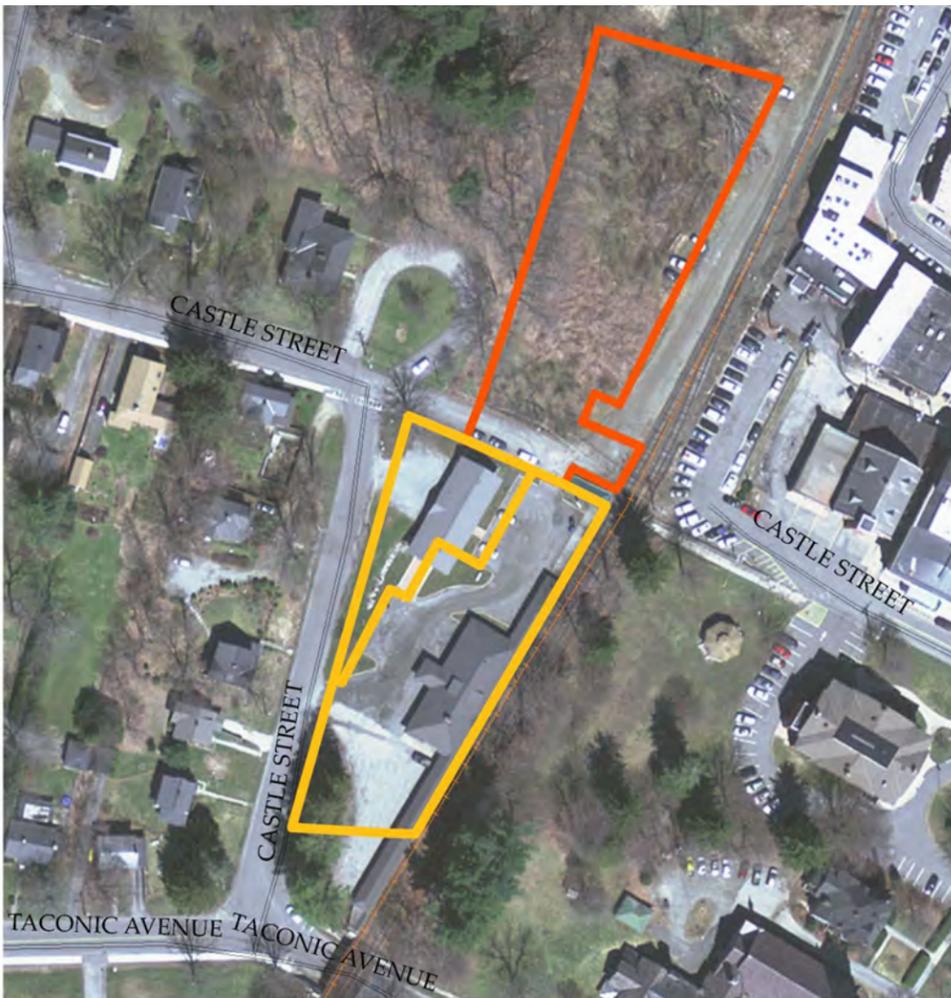
Town of Lee - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations

Site Name	Environmental Constraints
West Side Station location	(3) Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species
Pleasant Street Station (Alt)	(2) Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, FEMA 100 Year Floodplain



5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Town of Great Barrington - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations	
Site Name	Environmental Constraints
Historic Station	No environmental constraints were identified at this location
South Street/Maple Street (Alt)	No environmental constraints were identified at this location
High Street/Main Street (Alt)	No environmental constraints were identified at this location



Environmental Constraints
Preferred Site 1:
 Historic Station
 Castle Street, Castle Lane
 3.09 acres
 1130100000052B
 1130100000052C

Legend

- Existing Station Parcel
- Proposed Station Parking



Environmental Constraints
Alternative Site 2
 High Street/Main Street
 High Street, Rosseter Street, Main Street,
 Gas House Lane
 7.95 acres
 113014000000320
 113014000001740
 113014000000730
 113014000000710
 113014000000750
 113014000001780
 113014000001820
 11301400000182A

Legend

- High Street/Main Street
- Habitat for Rare, Endangered or Threatened Species
- Housatonic River
- Priority Conservation Area
- Wetland Resource Area and Buffer
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
- Riverfront Protection Area



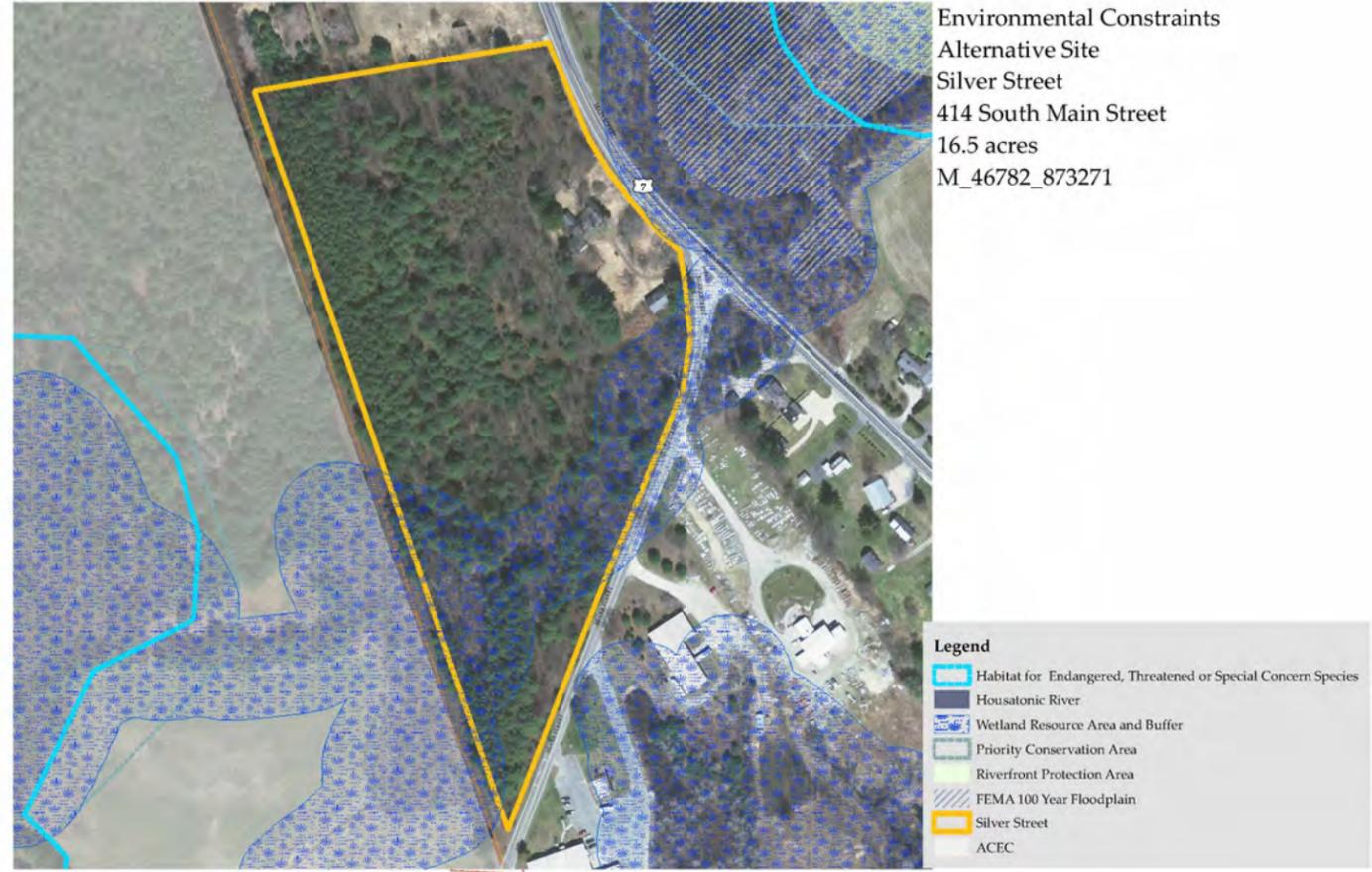
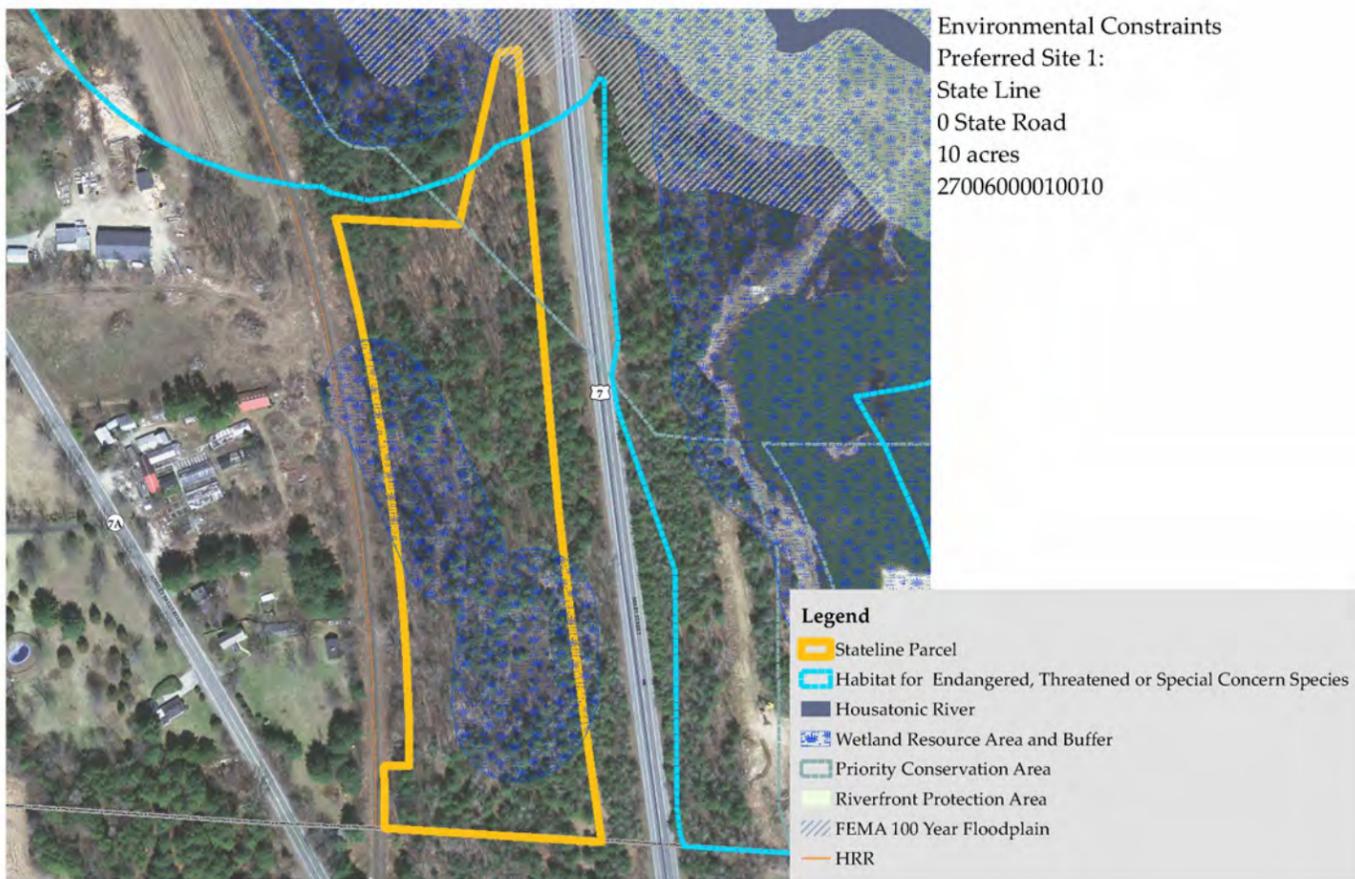
Environmental Constraints
Alternative Site 3
 South Street/Maple Avenue
 4.42 acres
 1130220000000410
 113022000000041C
 113022000000041A
 1130220000000420

Legend

- South Street/Maple Street
- Wetland Resource Area and Buffer
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF TARGET AREAS & RECOMMENDED PASSENGER RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Town of Sheffield - Recommended Passenger Rail Station Locations	
Site Name	Environmental Constraints
State Line Station	(3) Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, NHESP Priority Conservation Area, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species
Silver Street Station (Alt)	(1) Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer





6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

This section includes narratives and conceptual site plans for the proposed passenger rail station locations recommended in this report along with a discussion of the potential ownership considerations for the passenger rail stations.

Passenger Rail Sketch Plans

This section includes narratives and five conceptual site plans for the preferred passenger rail station locations recommended in this report.

- Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center in Pittsfield
- Westside Downtown Lee – Railroad Street/Consolati Way Municipal Site
- Great Barrington Historic Station Site
- Sheffield State Line Site

The report envisions two types of stations: regional and local. A regional station is expected to serve a larger geographic area and a greater number of southbound riders who require parking at or near the passenger rail station. Conversely, a local station is expected to serve a smaller geographic area and a lower number of southbound riders resulting in the need for a lesser amount of parking. The proposed passenger rail station in Pittsfield is envisioned as a regional station serving the city, its neighboring communities and northern Berkshire County. The proposed passenger rail stations in Lee and Great Barrington are envisioned as local stations serving the towns and their neighboring communities. Similar to Pittsfield, Sheffield is envisioned as a regional station serving the town, its neighboring communities and northwestern Connecticut.

Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center – Pittsfield, MA

(See Conceptual Site Plan on pages 67-68)

The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center is envisioned as a regional station serving the greater Pittsfield area and northern Berkshire County. Due to the existing track configuration and traffic on the CSX right-of-way, a covered high level boarding platform is proposed on the opposite side of the railroad right-of-way. The high level platform is connected to the Intermodal Center building by an elevated pedestrian walkway with stairs/elevators. The existing Intermodal Center building will be used to provide passengers with shelter and to provide amenities and services such as restrooms, ticketing and tourist information and will provide connections to other modes of transportation, such as buses, shuttles and taxi services. Passengers will access the high level platform through the Intermodal Center building or through a second entrance off Depot Street. A small city owned parking lot on Depot Street will be converted into a passenger pick-up/drop off area. The demand for parking generated by this service will be fulfilled by making short term and long term parking available at the Intermodal Center parking garage and in nearby city owned parking garages on Columbus Avenue and McKay Street and other surface lots that the city may select.

Railroad Street/Consolati Way Municipal Site—Lee, MA

(See Conceptual Site Plan on pages 69-70)

The proposed passenger rail station for the Downtown Lee site is envisioned as a local station that will serve the greater Lee area. A covered high level boarding platform and structure that fit with the character of the community will need to be constructed at this location. The station structure will be used to provide passengers with shelter and to provide amenities and services such as restrooms, benches, ticketing and tourist information. Due to the proximity of this location to the Housatonic River wherever possible a vegetated buffer is maintained between the parking lots and the river. The spatial constraints of this location necessitate that the high level platform be extended onto the railroad bridge over the Housatonic River to allow a sufficient platform length to serve multiple passenger cars without the need to acquire additional private property. Passengers in vehicles will access the site from Main Street via either Railroad Street or Consolati Way/Eaton Street. The demand for parking generated by this service will be fulfilled by making short term and long term parking available on-site to the east of the platform. The conceptual site plan shows approximately 145 on-site parking spaces that could be reduced based upon demand. Handicap accessible parking will be provided in close proximity to the station building. A passenger pick-up/drop off area is located in front of the station structure along with an area for bus, shuttle and taxi services. A pedestrian connection to the downtown area is provided and the proposed Lee Bikeway provides direct access to the station for pedestrians and cyclists.

Historic Station Site – Great Barrington, MA

(See Conceptual Site Plan on pages 71)

The proposed passenger rail station for the Historic Station site is envisioned as a local station that will serve the greater Great Barrington area. A new covered high level boarding platform will need to be constructed. The historic station building will be used to provide passengers with shelter and to provide amenities and services such as restrooms, benches, ticketing and tourist information. The demand for parking generated by this service will be fulfilled by making short term and long term parking available on-site to the north of the historic station building. The conceptual site plan shows approximately 180 on-site parking spaces that could be reduced based upon demand. Handicap accessible parking will be provided in close proximity to the station building. Passengers in vehicles will access the site from Main Street via Taconic Avenue and Castle Street and will be directed to park in a surface parking lot constructed on two parcels of land to the north of the historic station building. Passengers leaving the site will exit the parking lot onto Railroad Avenue and cross the railroad right-of-way onto Rosseter Street. Pedestrian access to the downtown area from the station site is provided via an existing pedestrian tunnel on Castle Street. A passenger pick-up/drop off area is located in front of the historic station building along with an area for bus, shuttle and taxi services. A more detailed structural analysis of the historic station building will be needed to ensure the structure is suitable for use as a contemporary passenger rail station. Any modifications to the historic station building should be taken in coordination with the town and respect the character of the neighborhood and the historic significance of the building.



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



State Line Site – Sheffield, MA

(See Conceptual Site Plan on page 72)

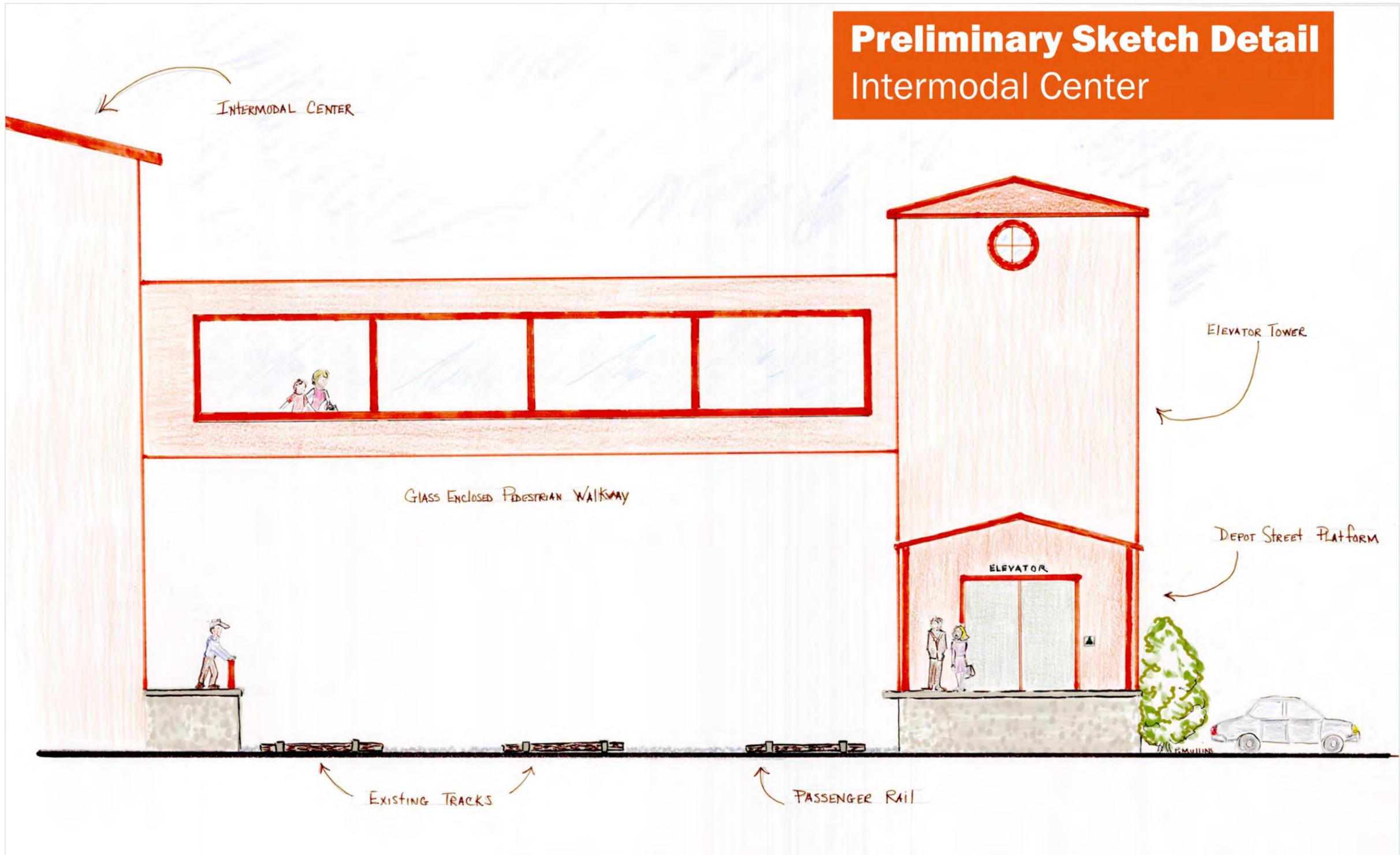
The proposed passenger rail station for the State Line site is envisioned as a regional station serving Sheffield, southern Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut. A covered high level boarding platform and station structure will need to be constructed. The station structure will be used to provide passengers with shelter and provide amenities and services such as restrooms, benches, ticketing and tourist information. The demand for parking generated by this service will be fulfilled by making short term and long term parking available on-site to the east of the historic station building. The conceptual site plan shows approximately 190 on-site parking spaces. Handicap accessible parking will be provided in close proximity to the station structure. Passengers in vehicles will access the site from Route 7 with dedicated entrance and exit driveways. A passenger pick-up/drop off area is located in front of the station structure along with a separate driveway and area for bus, shuttle and taxi services. To protect the rural character of the area the site is buffered from the road by natural vegetation so that it is not visible along Route 7.



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



Preliminary Sketch Detail Intermodal Center



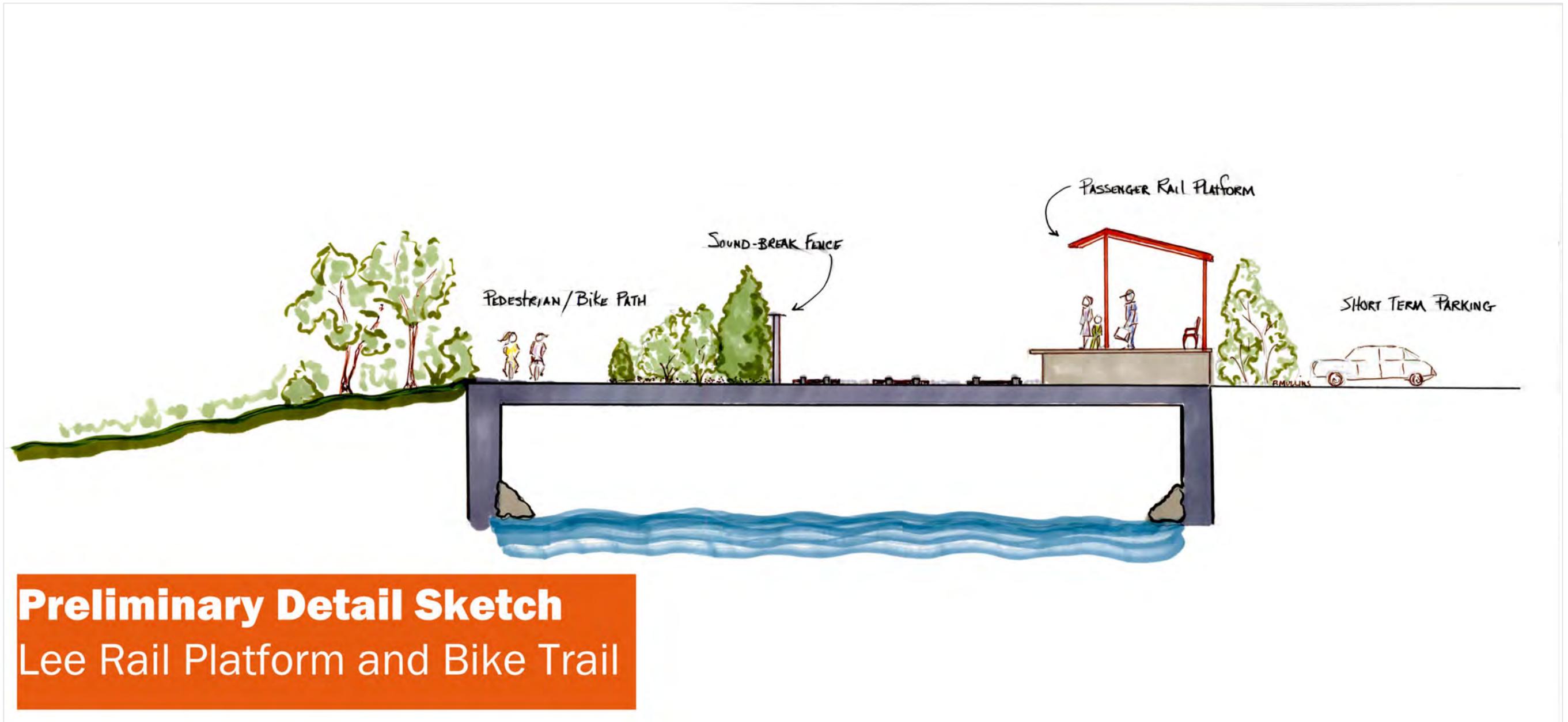


6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS





6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



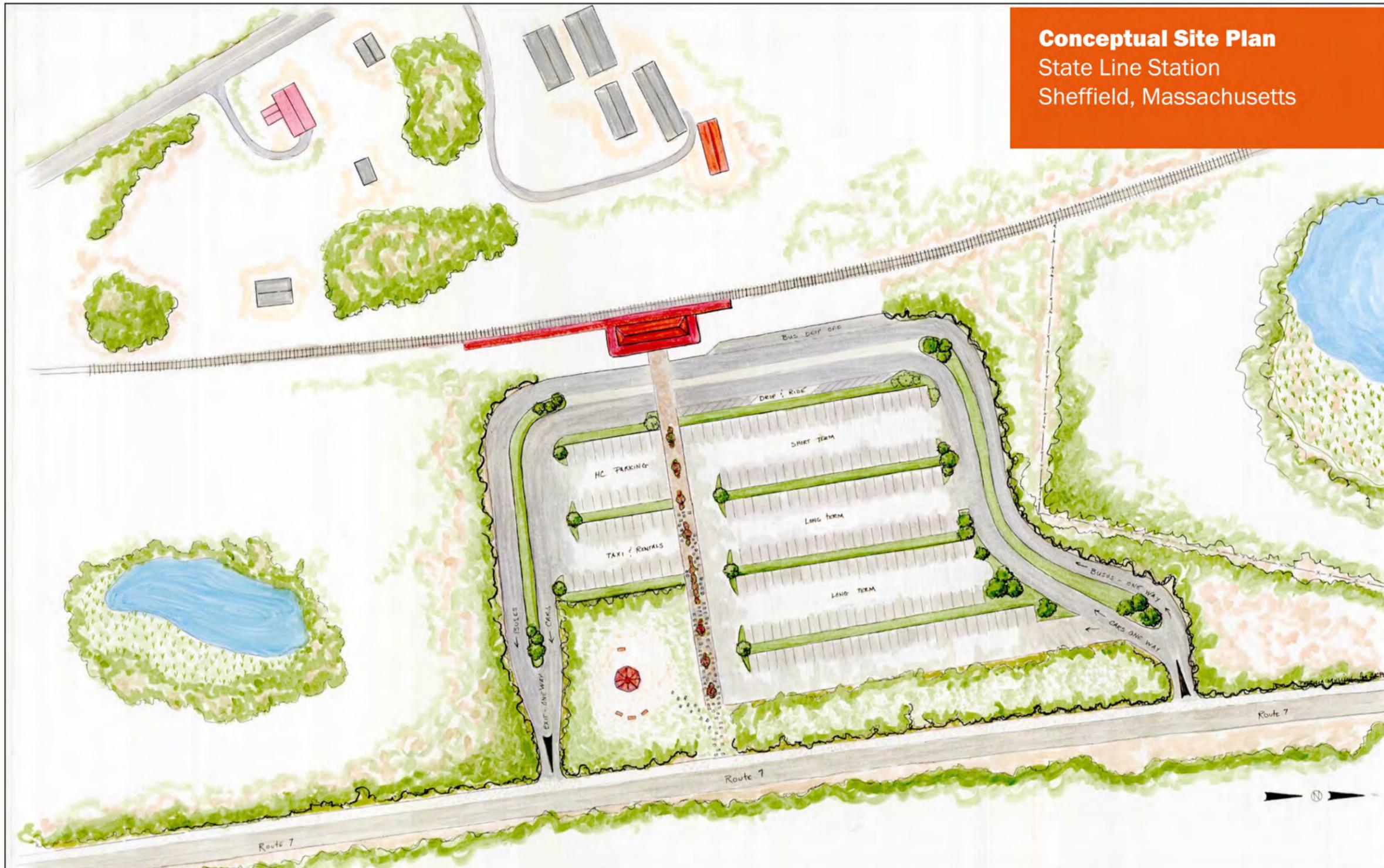


6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS





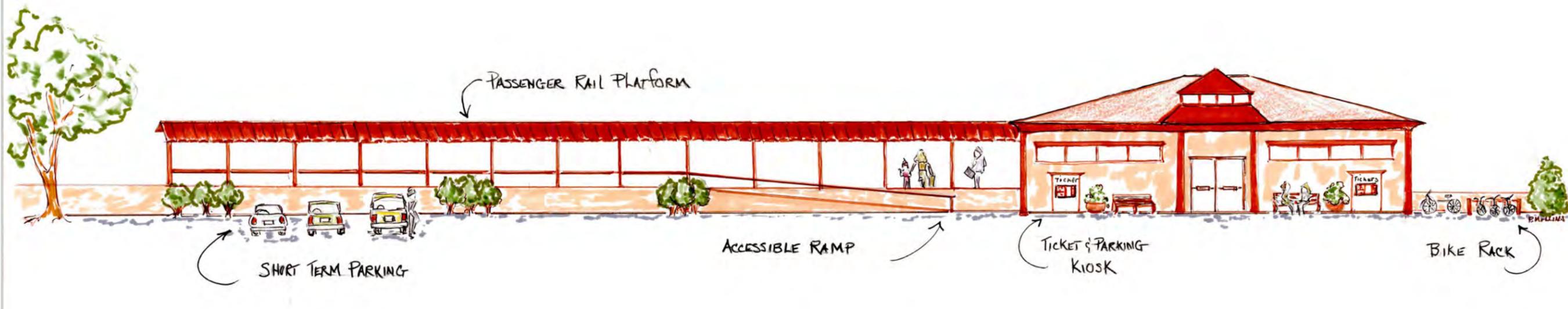
6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS





6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

Preliminary Sketch Detail Passenger Rail Platform





6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



Preliminary Sketch Detail
Passenger Rail Platform



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

Passenger Rail Station Ownership Considerations

The objective of this section is to identify the potential ownership scenarios for the passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line. In some instances, the ownership of the passenger rail facility is split between the tracks, platform, parking lot and facility. To provide a better understanding of the ownership scenarios of passenger rail facilities in New England the ownership scenarios of the Cape Flyer and the Downeaster passenger rail service are discussed below.

Cape Flyer

The Cape Flyer is a seasonal passenger rail service operating between the City of Boston and Cape Cod from Memorial Day through Labor Day. All of the passenger rail stations on the Cape Flyer service are

Table 6.1: Passenger Rail Facilities on the Cape Flyer Service

Boston, MA (South Station)	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Braintree, MA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Middleborough/Lakeville, MA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Wareham Village, MA	Mass DOT
Buzzards Bay, MA	Mass DOT
Hyannis, MA	Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority

Source: Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, individual towns

ownership. Four (4) of the twelve (12) passenger rail stations on the Downeaster passenger rail service are privately owned and the rest are publically owned. Of the four (4) privately owned passenger rail stations two (2) of them have parking lots owned by the municipality. Of the publically owned passenger rail stations three (3) are owned by municipalities, four (4) are owned by public transit authorities, and one (1) is owned by a state university. (See Table 6.2).

Ownership Considerations for the Berkshire Line

The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Center in the City of Pittsfield is owned and operated by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). The BRTA's ownership and experience in operating the intermodal facility is an asset that might be relied upon for the remaining passenger rail stations.

In the absence of a private developer coming forward to finance and construct a passenger rail station, likely as a component of a larger development, all or some of the passenger rail stations on the Berkshire Line will need to be publically owned. Using the ownership scenarios of the Downeaster service as a guide, the public or non-profit entities that may have an interest in owning one more of the passenger rail stations are the BRTA, Mass DOT, 1 Berkshire (Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitor's Bureau) or the municipalities. Whether or not any of the aforementioned entities have an interest in owning a passenger rail station is unknown. Conversations with these entities about their interest and capacity to own a passenger rail station and what partnerships may need to be formed will need to occur as the proposed service continues to develop and the locations of the passenger rail stations are finalized.

publically owned by either a public transit authority or Mass DOT. (See Table 6.1).

Downeaster

The Downeaster is a passenger rail service operating between Boston, Massachusetts and Brunswick, Maine. The passenger rail facilities on the Downeaster service have an interesting mix of

Table 6.2: Passenger Rail Facilities on the Downeaster Service

Passenger Rail Facility	Owner	
	Station Facility	Platform
Brunswick, ME	JHR Development of Maine LLC (Municipally owned parking lot)	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
Freeport, ME	LL Bean (Municipally owned parking lot)	NNEPRA/State of Maine
Portland, ME	Concord Coach Lines	Pan Am Railways/Maine DOT
Old Orchard Beach, ME	Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce	Town of Old Orchard Beach/Pan Am Railways
Saco-Biddeford, ME	City of Saco	Pan Am Railways/City of Saco
Wells, ME	Maine Turnpike Authority	Pan Am Railways/Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
Dover, NH	City of Dover	Pan Am Railways/NH DOT
Durham, NH	University of New Hampshire (UNH)	Pan Am Railways/UNH
Exeter, NH	Town of Exeter	Pan Am Railways/NH DOT
Haverhill, MA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Woburn, MA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Boston, MA (North Station)	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Source: Great American Stations, Amtrak, <http://www.greatamericanstations.com/> last accessed on 07/18/14



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



Passenger Rail Station Costs

The reintroduction of passenger rail service to Berkshire County along the Berkshire line will require funding for improvements and/or construction for up to four passenger rail stations.

The final cost of constructing a passenger rail station will depend on a number of different factors:

- Site acquisition costs
- Site condition and preparation
- Necessary site and/or area improvements
- Size/area of site
- Type of Station (simple platform and shelter or building and platform similar to the Intermodal Center in Pittsfield)
- Station Amenities

Certainly the type of passenger rail station will have a strong influence on the cost of a passenger rail station. A newly constructed simple platform and open air shelter in Exeter, NH cost approximately \$354,000. A station building and platform built in Wells, ME in 2002 cost approximately \$2.2 million dollars and a platform and station building constructed in Rutland, VT in 1999 cost approximately \$718,000. At the high end of the range, the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Center in Pittsfield, MA opened in 2004 at a cost of approximately \$11 million dollars.

The recommendation for the passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line is that the stations be more than a simple platform and open-air structure. Our recommendation is that the passenger rail stations consist of an actual station building, covered platform and comfort amenities like restrooms and climate controlled waiting areas simi-

lar to the Wells, ME and Rutland, VT type stations that had a cost of construction at \$718,000 (in 1999) and \$2.2 million dollars. Thus an estimate of between \$1.0 million to \$2.0 million dollars or more per station appears to be a reasonable estimate.

Table 6.3 provides information on construction costs and funding for various passenger rail stations in New England.

It is worth noting that the passenger rail station can become a source of revenue to the station owners whether it be a private owner or a public owner, such as a municipality. This is most true when the passenger rail station is one part of a multi-use development where the owner receives lease payments from other tenants. Another important observation is that for all the stations included in the table the entire cost of constructing the station was never borne solely by the municipality, rather the funding was a combination of federal, state, local and in some cases private funds. Thus, when the time arrives to construct the passenger rail stations those with the responsibility of constructing the stations should explore the availability of funding from a wide array of sources.



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

Table 6.3: Passenger Rail Station Cost Comparison

	Station Station Type	Station Cost Construction Cost	Funding Sources	Ridership Annual	Revenue Annual	Comment or Special Note
	Exeter, New Hampshire Newly constructed platform and shelter	\$354,000	U.S. DOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grant, Town of Exeter	101,543	\$991,968	1 side platform, single track Located on the edge of Exeter's historic downtown with a concrete platform featuring a covered, open-air shelter.
	Wells, Maine Train station as well as regional transportation center serving inter-city buses, carpools and local trolley.	\$1,400,000	Federal grant, State funds	52,448	\$754,186	The Town of Wells and its Chamber of Commerce sponsor the Transportation Center waiting area and restrooms.
	Brunswick, Maine Brunswick Station, a mixed-use development including a Visitors Center. There is one platform with a shelter canopy.	\$5,200,000	EPA Brownfields Program, Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, CDBG, Maine's Municipal Investment Trust Fund, municipal bonds, city cash for property acquisition	30,187	\$620,125	Brunswick acquired the station site (former brownfields site) and conducted remediation activities with EPA Brownfields Cleanup funds. The Brunswick Station is a mixed-use development, which has attracted and leveraged private investment funds.
	Saco, Maine Enclosed train station with short term and long term parking.	\$2,200,000	Tax increment financing in conjunction with private development on Saco Island	50,043	\$754,937	A "green" station: powered by 100-ft wind turbine and heated, and cooled by a geothermal energy system used an adjacent well. Built with passive solar design.



6. PASSENGER RAIL STATION SKETCH PLANS & OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS



Table 6.3-2: Passenger Rail Station Cost Comparison

	Station Station Type	Station Cost Construction Cost	Funding Sources	Ridership Annual	Revenue Annual
	Pittsfield, Mass. Intermodal Center with Amtrak service, passenger bus service, regional bus service, classrooms, and Pittsfield Visitors Center. Sheltered platform, enclosed waiting room.	\$11,000,000	Federal earmark, local match, state funds	7,656	\$266,897
	Randolph, VT Renovated 1870s Depot	\$250,000	Transportation Enhancement funds from the Federal Transit Administration; Town of Randolph	2,009	\$102,669
	Rutland, VT Downtown station constructed in 1999.	\$718,000	Federal Transit Administration, City of Rutland, private donation	16,815	\$993,967



7. STATION AREA PLANS

Introduction to the Station Area Plans

As part of the Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Analysis, BRPC chose to develop a Station Area Plan (SAP) for each of the four station areas it has recommended: the Pittsfield Intermodal Center, Downtown Lee, Downtown Great Barrington and the State Line area in Sheffield. The purpose of each SAP is to identify the challenges and opportunities present in the ½ mile radius of the proposed station site (station area) and to assist the respective communities in preparing for both the benefits and impacts of reintroduced passenger rail service. The ½ mile radius station area is considered best practice in planning, recommended by the Federal Railroad Administration in their station area planning guidance, and is also heavily cited in Transit Oriented Development (TOD), transit planning, and passenger rail station literature.

Each SAP is composed of six sections: station area context, station area vision, station area existing conditions, opportunities, challenges and recommendations. The content and purpose of each section is described in this introductory outline.

Data and information regarding each station area was drawn from multiple sources. The demographic and housing data was drawn from the 2010 U.S. Census and 2008-2012 American Community Survey. In Lee and Great Barrington, data was extracted specifically for the downtown areas by using the Census geographic level Census Designated Place. This allowed for a comparison between the station areas and the remaining area of the community to note differences which may inform challenges, opportunities and recommendations. In Pittsfield, Census Tract level information was used. There was no differentiated information available for the State Line area in Sheffield.

For SAP maps, data from MassGIS was used, as was data and information generated by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and local communities.

Station Area Context

The Station Area Context section provides an introduction to the physical location of the station area, including the recommended site locations and target areas, and provides a preliminary snapshot of the station area and its physical relationship to the rest of the community and rail corridor.

Station Area Vision

This section provides a discussion about what each of the communities' desire for the station area as gleaned from various community planning documents. In some cases, these planning documents are very recent, such as in Great Barrington, where the Master Plan was adopted in October 2013. In other cases, these community planning documents are less recent, such as Lee, where the most recent Master Plan was adopted in 2000.

Station Area Existing Conditions

The existing conditions summary serves as an inventory of demographic, socio-economic, housing, and transportation characteristics within the station area. It also considers existing infrastructure within the station area. The purpose of the existing conditions summary is to make apparent any key differences between the station area and broader community that may support and inform future planning and development efforts. Rather than provide a dense and long report of tables and descriptions, the existing conditions section instead provides a synopsis. The data in greater detail can be made available to communities by BRPC upon request.

Opportunities to Achieve the Station Area Vision

The Opportunities section describes the opportunities and strengths that exist within the station area that make it easier for the communities to achieve their goals for the station area and also make locating a passenger rail station in this area successful. For example: current best practice research indicates that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is more likely to succeed and bear benefits to local communities if there is existing transit in place within the station area, and if mixed-use is supported through zoning.

Challenges to Achieving the Station Area Vision

The Challenges section describes issues that have been identified through data analysis and research that could make the achievement of the community's goals for the station area and the use of the area as a passenger rail station difficult. In some instances, an issue may be identified that necessitates it being addressed coincidentally with the development of a passenger rail station. For example: In Great Barrington, parking has been identified as a challenge. If the existing rail station were to be redeveloped, parking could be a focus of related planning and development efforts.

Recommendations to Achieve the Station Area Vision

The recommendations are offered to assist the communities with capturing the benefits of the proposed passenger rail station while avoiding and minimizing the impacts of the proposed passenger rail station. This section discusses the types of planning and development efforts that might be undertaken. It also looks at ongoing, local planning and development efforts and identifies how a

passenger rail station can support those efforts, or how those efforts support the development of a passenger rail station.

7. STATION AREA PLANS

Intermodal Center Station

Station Area Context

The Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center located on Columbus Avenue in Pittsfield is the proposed northern terminus for HRRC's passenger rail service. The Intermodal Center already provides Amtrak service to Berkshire residents, provides a connection for passenger bus service, as well as the regional transportation service operated by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). The Intermodal Center also houses the Pittsfield Visitors Center. The Intermodal Center site has no development or environmental constraints.

The station area was identified by creating a ¼ and ½ mile buffer around the Intermodal Center. The station area is defined by the following boundaries: from Fourth Street to Euclid Avenue from east to west, and from Henry Avenue to just shy of Burbank Street from south to north. At the ¼ mile radius boundary, the area is bound by Cosby Place and the Housatonic River from east to west and by South Church Street to Linden Street from south to north. The ¼ mile area encompasses approximately 209 acres; the ½ mile radius encompasses approximately 652 acres. Figure 7.1 demonstrates the ¼ and ½ mile radius from the Intermodal Center, as well as a locus map demonstrating the Intermodal Center and station area's relationship to Pittsfield. The station area is nearly 11 miles from the recommended Downtown Lee station area, 20 miles from Great Barrington, and roughly 31 miles from the Sheffield State Line site. As the northernmost stop, the Intermodal Center would provide passenger rail access to northern Berkshire communities and is within twenty miles of North Adams, Adams and Williamstown. The Intermodal Center's location already serves the most populous city in the Berkshires, Pittsfield (population: 44,168), and could potentially serve as an important transportation option for the nearly 30,000 residents living in the other three most populous Berkshire region cities and towns: North Adams, William-

Community	Population
Pittsfield	44,168
North Adams	13,583
Adams	8,383
Williamstown	7,700
Total	73,834

stown and Adams (see Table 7.1), as well as residents in Lanesborough, Dalton and other central and northern Berkshire towns.

The station area itself spans the downtown area and the Westside and Morningside neighborhoods. This means it captures a concentration of commercial activity, as well as, a concentration of residential activity and use.

It is anticipated that the Intermodal Center station would draw a total of 180,340 riders per year. In developing this figure, Market Street Research assumed that the ridership in Pittsfield (including northern Berkshires and Southern Vermont) would take some time (at least five years or more) to fully mature. Although this is the lowest anticipated ridership of the four proposed stations, the Intermodal Center station area offers a rich variety of uses and destination activities and it also offers current potential for commercial and residential development.

Station Area Vision

The Intermodal Center Station Area is a busy area of arrivals and departures for passengers. Those alighting the train are greeted with a range of transportation connections to their points of interest and places of accommodation and food establishments. Much of these are within an easy walk or bus trip from the Intermodal Center. The station itself is prized for the ease of access it provides and its proximity to the shopping, business, and cultural destinations in downtown Pittsfield. The city, local businesses and property owners work to-

Figure 7.1: Intermodal Center Station Area



gether to beautify the station area and make visitors feel welcome through clear signage and information. The station area is not just busy when a train is expected or when businesses are open, it maintains activity and a sense of safety throughout the day.

The City of Pittsfield's 2009 Master Plan does not explicitly mention the possibility of returned passenger rail service from New York City. It does emphasize goals and highlights strategies recommended to further encourage activity and tourism in Pittsfield's downtown area.

The specific items from the Master Plan are listed below:

Land Use and Development Patterns Goals

- Grow and develop in a manner that reinforces and compliments Pittsfield's urban and historic character.
- Promote Sustainable Development

7. STATION AREA PLANS

Housing Quality and Affordability and Neighborhood Development

- Create and preserve neighborhoods that attract new people and retain current residents.
- Provide a diversity of affordable workforce housing
- Provide a diversity of housing choices for all stages of life
- Improve quality of housing stock

Economic and Cultural Development and Historic and Cultural Resources

- Promote the growth and expansion of new and existing businesses that support the city's economic, environmental and social vision.
- Expand and capitalize on Pittsfield's diverse cultural institutions and historic fabric.

Transportation and Circulation/Public Facilities and Services

- Manage the flow of traffic in and through the city
- Enhance the walkability of the community as a whole, as well as, improving public transit.
- Provide public facilities and government operations that contribute to the city's economic and environmental vision, as well as, ensuring a high quality of life for Pittsfield residents.

Station Area Existing Conditions

Demographics

An estimated 10,123 people live within the Intermodal Center station area. Though the station area is physically defined by the North Street commercial corridor, nearly twenty-three percent of the city's population lives within a ½ mile of the Intermodal Center. The station area has fewer family households than the rest of Pittsfield and a greater percentage of householders living alone. The average median age in the Intermodal Center station area is 36.7 years, which is lower than the median age in the remaining area of Pittsfield of 42.5 years old. There is a greater percentage of householders living alone, fewer households with children under eighteen, and a greater percentage of householders sixty-five or older living alone within the station area. This is likely attributable to the two large senior housing developments within the station area. In terms of race, the most notable

difference between the station area and city as a whole is the higher percentage of Black or African Americans and Hispanic or Latino residents, which in both cases are nearly double the percentage for the rest of Pittsfield. Still, the station area is predominately white. Median household income in the station area is lower than in Pittsfield: \$17,108 versus \$42,076 respectively. The percentage of residents unemployed in the civilian labor force is higher in the station area. A greater percentage of residents within the station area have no access to a vehicle—46.7% within the station area compared to 15.1% in Pittsfield.

Housing Characteristics

There are an estimated 2,619 housing units within the Intermodal Center station area. The station area has a higher percentage of vacant housing units than the rest of the city, and a greater percentage of rental units. The homeowner vacancy rate in the station area is 8.4%, whereas the homeowner vacancy rate for the city of Pittsfield is 1.4%. The station area's rental vacancy rate is similar to that of the city, between 7.6 and 7.9%. More residents within the station area rent: only 10.2% of the units within the station area are identified as owner-occupied, compared to 60.4% in Pittsfield. The station area has a greater percentage of vacant housing units than Pittsfield: 17% versus 8.8%. Only 5.5% of the housing units within the station area are 1-unit, detached structures. The majority of units are between 3-4 units or 20 or more units. The majority of units have one to two bedrooms. In terms of housing stock age composition, the station area has a greater percentage of homes built in 1939 or earlier than in Pittsfield as a whole. A large percentage of residents in the station area have moved into the area in 2000 or later. Nearly 61% of residents moved in between 2000 to 2009, and 17% moved in 2010 or later.

In terms of housing value, the median owner-occupied unit value in the station area is \$132,000, which is lower than the value for the rest of Pittsfield at \$174,900. The majority of the station area's homes are in the lower categories of valuation: 42.7% fall between \$100,000 and \$149,999; and 28.6% fall between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

Residents within the station area are more burdened in terms of housing costs in all three categories: those with a mortgage, those

without a mortgage, and those renting. For those with a mortgage, 88.6% of residents within the station area indicate spending 35% or more of their income on monthly owner costs, compared to 31.9% in Pittsfield. Forty-eight percent of people occupying rental units in the station area indicated paying 35% or more of their income on gross rent, compared to 43.5% in Pittsfield. Nearly half of residents (46.8%) without a mortgage indicated spending 30% or more of their income on selected monthly owner costs, compared to less than 25% of owners in Pittsfield.

According to Trulia, properties for sale within the Intermodal Center Station Area range from a \$25,900 multi-bedroom home to a \$140,000 single family home. An apartment for sale is listed at \$179,000. There is also commercial space available for rent or purchase within the station area.

Land Use

The Intermodal Center Station Area contains approximately 656.5 acres. The commercial corridor of North Street is flanked by a medium density residential neighborhood to the west and a neighborhood of high density, multi-family and medium density residential to the east of the North Street commercial corridor. The residential neighborhoods flanking the North Street commercial corridor and included within the station area are the Westside neighborhood and the Morningside neighborhood. According to a 2009 Slum and Blight study, the Westside and Morningside neighborhoods contain significant blight and property distress, the majority of the city's affordable rental housing, as well as the city's lowest prices for homes on the market. The Intermodal Center Station Area runs the gamut: from high-density residential to industrial sites; from a busy commercial corridor with excellent pedestrian infrastructure and the characteristics of a traditional "Main Street" to a residential neighborhood bordering the former General Electric campus.

Nearly forty-eight percent of the station area is in some type of residential use. The largest portion of this residential use is multi-family, followed by high-density residential. Generally, residential use is concentrated to the west, north and east of the North Street commercial corridor. High-density residential uses are evenly distributed through the eastern half, whereas there is a greater concentration of

7. STATION AREA PLANS

urban public institutional use to the south of the Intermodal Center. Industrial uses are interspersed throughout the station area, with large tracts of this use to the south of the ¼ mile boundary. Commercial uses are also interspersed through the station area beyond the North Street corridor. North Street beyond the Intermodal Center is hugged by commercial uses, as is the railroad track itself within the ¼ mile station area radius. According to the City of Pittsfield, within the station area, there is a concentration of vacancies within the western quadrant, and a smaller number in the eastern quadrant, or the Westside and Morningside neighborhoods respectively. There are more vacant lots than vacant structures. There are nearly forty acres of developable land within the Intermodal Center Station Area—nearly six percent of the land area.

There are eleven parks or open space areas in the Intermodal Center Station Area. These include the Pittsfield Common on First Street, and the Persip and Sotille parks, which are located adjacent to the Intermodal Center and across North Street, respectively. These also include three playgrounds north of the railroad corridor. The smaller Sotille Park and Persip Park, as well as Dunham Mall, provide public spaces within the station area, and also offer the opportunity for public art or programming to activate the spaces and help make the station area a welcoming space for visitors and residents.

There is wetland area adjacent to the station area on the northwestern and eastern areas. These wetland areas are beyond the ½ mile station area radius. There is 100 year floodplain within the station area along the Housatonic River and on the west side of Silver Lake. Most of the

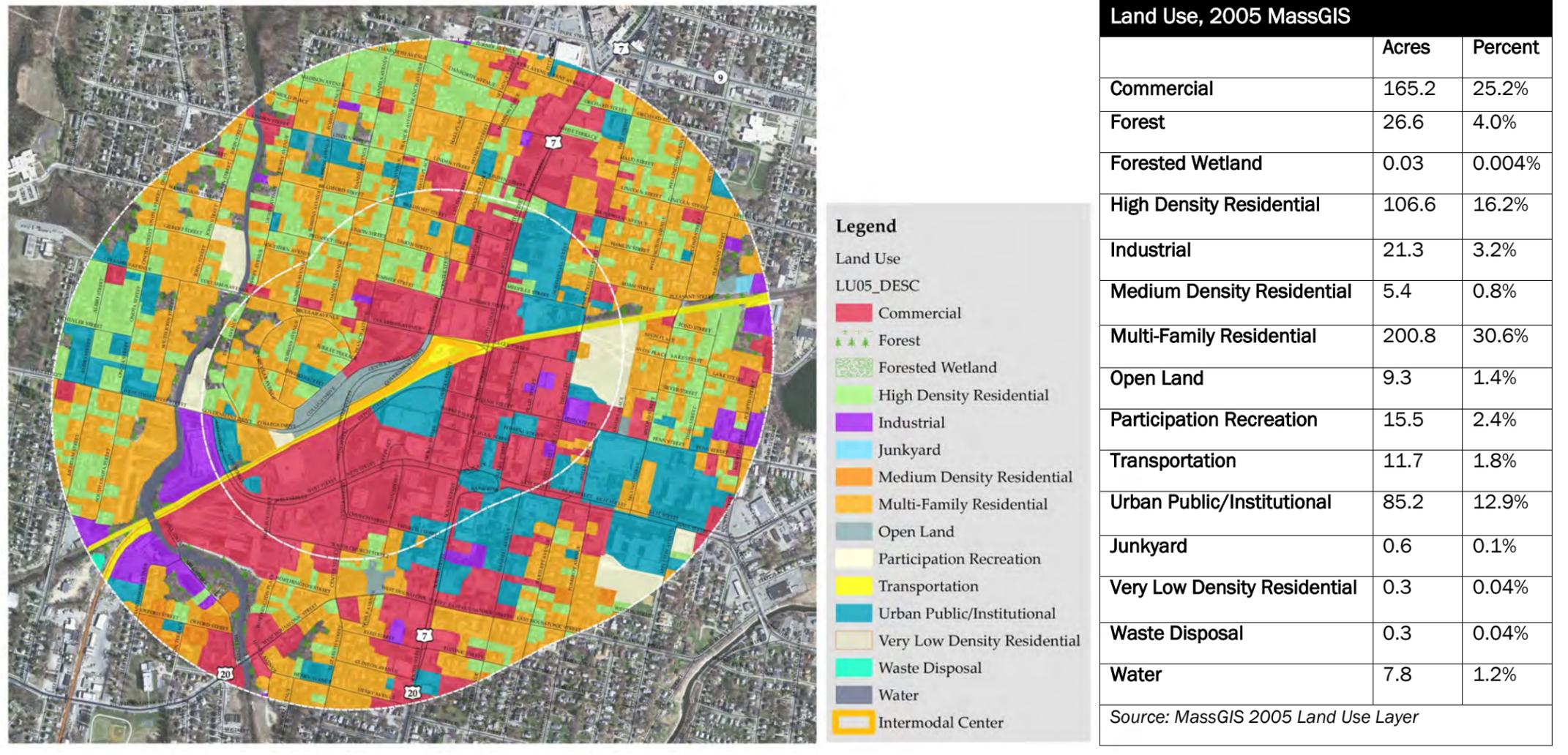
floodplain within the station area is developed, with high density residential, industrial and commercial uses. Both the wetland and floodplain areas are linked to the east and west branches of the Housatonic River. There is also riverfront protection area along the Housatonic River.

Approximately 4% or 26 acres of land within the station area is classified as forest according to the Commonwealth’s MassGIS database. This is not conserved forestland or woodland harvested for profit,

but rather urban property, street, shade and park trees.

There are two historic districts located within the station area. (See Figure 7.3). The Park Square Historic District stretches from West Housatonic Street to Fenn Street. The Upper North Street Commercial District stretches from Eagle Street to Madison Avenue. The Intermodal Center is not located in any of these districts.

Figure 7.2: Land Use within the Intermodal Center Station Area



7. STATION AREA PLANS

Figure 7.3: Historic Districts within the Intermodal Center Station Area



There are three hotels within the Intermodal Center Station Area, and a boutique hotel on North Street is in the planning stage. There are approximately 126 dining establishments within the station area. Three of the county's top tourist attractions are within the station area: the Colonial Theater, the Berkshire Museum, and the Barrington Stage Company. The station area includes a number of community anchors, including the Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield High School, City Hall, and both the Pittsfield Fire Department and Pittsfield Police Department. Wahconah Park, an historic minor league baseball park, borders the station area to the north, and one of the region's largest employers, Berkshire Health Systems, and the county's largest hospital, Berkshire Medical Center, are also located at the northern end of the station area.

Zoning

The zoning within the ½ mile Intermodal Center Station Area radius reflects the land uses and activities and the different neighborhood sections captured within the station area. The Intermodal Center itself falls within the Downtown Business District. The Downtown Business district is one of eight zoning districts within the station area, listed in Figure 7.4. The area immediately surrounding the Intermodal Center is within the Downtown Business district. The other two districts within the ¼ mile radius are the General Business and High Density Multi-Family districts. Both the General and Downtown Business districts allow for uses such as office buildings, retail

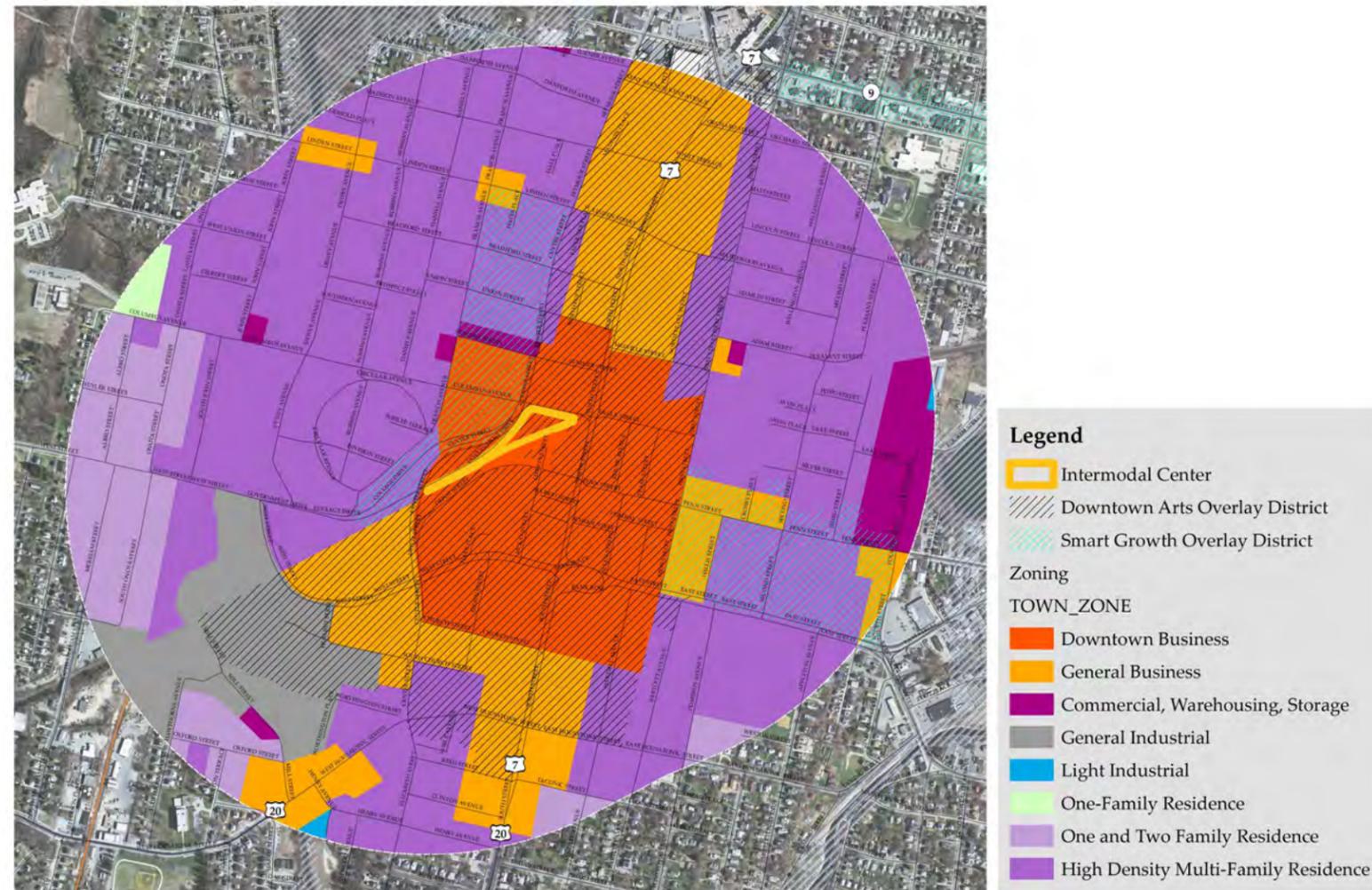
stores, service establishments and high density housing. The ½ mile radius includes a greater concentration of residential districts. This lay out reflects the commercial character of the North Street corridor, as well as the mixed-use, city center feel of the Pittsfield downtown area. It also reflects the flanking residential neighborhoods which encircle the North Street commercial corridor. The General Industrial district at the southern end of the station area is located along the railroad tracks. More than half of the area is zoned for high density multi-family residences, and this correlates with the high percentage of multi-unit housing structures indicated in the demographic summary.

Zoning by Area

District	Acres	Percent
Downtown Business	91.5	13.9%
General Business	111.7	17%
Commercial, Warehousing and Storage	16.9	2.6%
General Industrial	41.53	6.3%
Light Industrial	0.7	0.1%
R-20 (One Family Residence)	2.7	0.4%
R-6 (One and Two Family Residence)	47.9	7.3%
R-M (High Density Multi-Family Residence)	343.5	52.3%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Data for Pittsfield

Figure 7.4: Zoning within the Intermodal Center Station Area



7. STATION AREA PLANS

Many of the existing uses would align with the goals of Transit Oriented Development, including housing, commercial activity and transit.

There are two overlay districts within the Intermodal Center Station Area. These are the Downtown Arts Overlay District (DAOD) and two smaller 40R Smart Growth Overlay Districts. The DAOD seeks to enhance the vibrancy of Pittsfield’s downtown by encouraging a mix of uses through increased housing opportunities, and promoting arts-related development and activities. Pedestrian activity is encouraged, as is economic revitalization. The Smart Growth Overlay District was established to encourage smart growth in line with Chapter 40R, supporting high density and a range of housing opportunities in the urban core. Development standards in this overlay district allow context-sensitive design and creative site planning. The Intermodal Center itself is surrounded by these overlay districts, and falls within the DAOD.

Transportation

The Intermodal Center is accessible via North Street, Columbus Avenue and Center Street. The station area is served by Route 7, which provides north-south access, Route 20 which provides both north-south and east-west access and Route 9 which provide east-west access. The Intermodal Center provides daily Amtrak service between Boston and Chicago and places in between. It also provides inter-city passenger bus service via Peter Pan and serves as the hub of the BRTA regional public bus system. Pedestrian infrastructure within the ¼ mile radius is strong, most notably along South Street and North Street, including through the commercial corridor along North Street. Recent street improvement projects have implemented complete street design components such as curb bump-outs, paver crosswalks, shared bike facilities, benches, rain gardens, public art and wide sidewalks. There is also a planned project to improve the circulation and surface condition of the streets around Berkshire Medical Center, at the northern edge of the station area.

Access, Circulation, Parking and Connectivity

Routes 7, 20 and 9 all intersect the station area, forming strong hinges around which collector and local roads operate to connect residents and visitors to other neighborhoods in Pittsfield and areas of

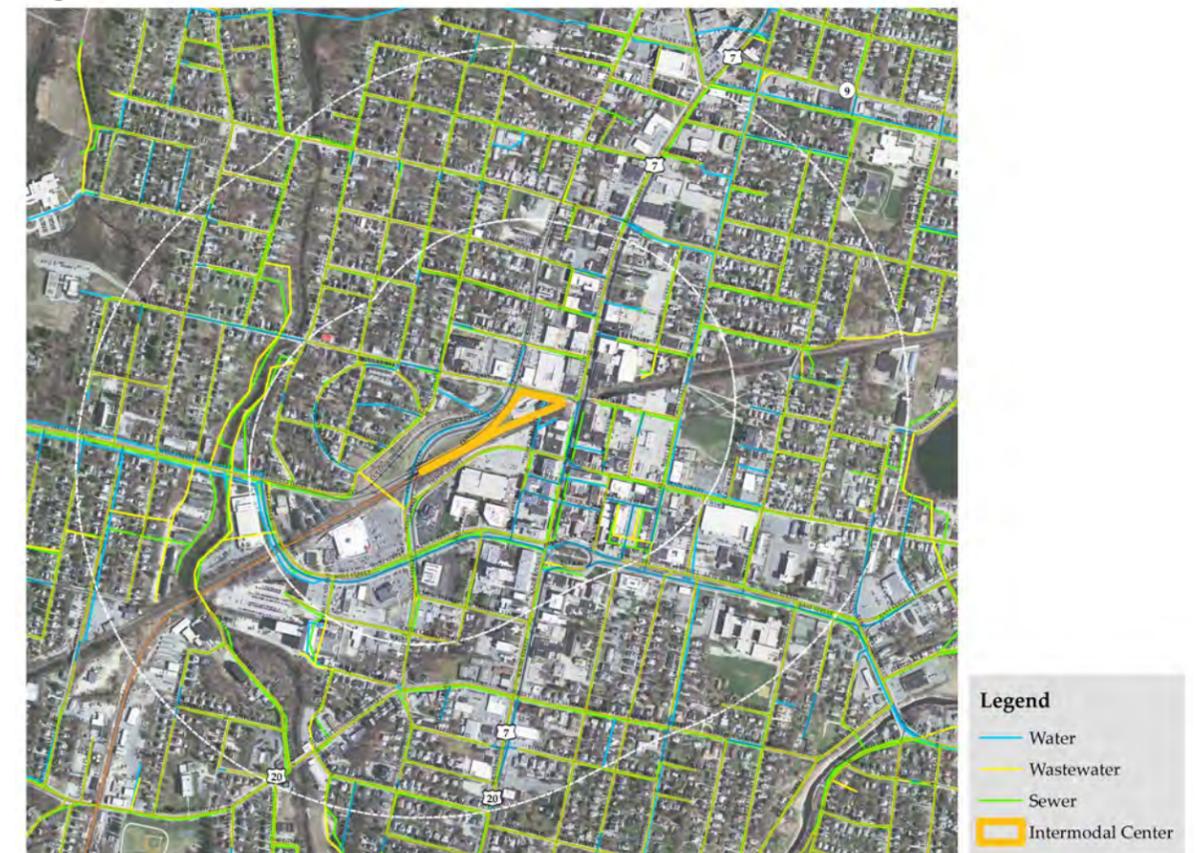
commercial activity such as the West Housatonic Street corridor, the East Street corridor and the Allendale commercial area, as well the rest of central and northern Berkshire County. North Street runs parallel to First Street/Route 7, connecting the southern section of the station area near the Berkshire Museum north toward Berkshire Medical Center and Wahconah Street. North Street has undergone substantial improvements in recent years to make it an enticing corridor for drivers as well as pedestrians. At the East and North Street intersection, Park Square diverts traffic heading east toward Route 9 or northward using First Street/Route 7. Columbus Avenue, the Intermodal Center’s street, is accessible via North Street as well as Center Street, which connects traffic coming from Routes 41 and 20 to Pittsfield’s Westside. A 2010 traffic analysis indicates that North Street, south of Wahconah Street, is the busiest street within the Intermodal Center Station Area, with an average daily traffic (ADT) count of 15,400. This is only exceeded by traffic along Route 9 in the City of Pittsfield. Level of service is good through the North Street/Route 7 corridor, and reaches its peak congestion at peak commute hours, such as the morning and evening. The Intermodal Center has its own small parking garage. There also exist two additional parking structures: one on McKay Street and one on Columbus Avenue. There is also surface parking available around the Intermodal Center and throughout the station area. The City of Pittsfield recently commissioned a parking study, conducted by Nelson Nygaard, a national transportation planning firm. Preliminary results of this study indicate that Pittsfield has parking capacity which exceeds current demand and could handle increased demand. The city is working with Nelson Nygaard to develop a parking management plan to better serve the needs of visitors as well as residents and employees working in the offices, stores and other businesses downtown. With a projected 180,340 riders estimated for the Pittsfield station location, and half of these riders

anticipated to be departures, both short term and long term parking will be necessary near and around the Intermodal Center to best support passenger rail service. The yet to be released Pittsfield parking study will provide valuable information about parking options around the Intermodal Center.

Public Infrastructure

The Intermodal Center Station Area is served by municipal water and sewer. Pittsfield has its own wastewater treatment facility. According to city officials, the wastewater treatment facility has capacity to accommodate additional development. Similarly, the city’s drinking water system has capacity to serve additional development.

Figure 7.5: Public Infrastructure in the Intermodal Center Station Area



Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Database

7. STATION AREA PLANS

Opportunities for Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Sufficient Parking Capacity

The preliminary results of the Pittsfield parking study indicate that the City of Pittsfield has ample parking capacity, and some of this parking opportunity is immediately adjacent to the Intermodal Center.

Sewer and Water Capacity for Additional Development

The Intermodal Center Station Area is well served by both existing water and sewer infrastructure and both have ample additional capacity.

Adequate Traffic Circulation

Traffic analysis and counts indicate that the transportation system in Pittsfield and the Intermodal Center Station Area maintains even flow. Even peak periods such as morning and evening commute times see relatively good flow through the downtown area and within gateway/transition areas.

Supports Ongoing Initiatives and Planning Efforts

Enhancing activity and making visitors feeling more welcome in the city is a goal of the Pittsfield Master Plan, and improving the built environment and the range of opportunities for residents is both a local and regional initiative to bolster quality of life as well as economic and community development.

Pittsfield is an Exciting Place to Be

Pittsfield has a lot going on: Berkshire Health Systems is the region's largest employer. There are regional attractions such as the Berkshire Museum, the Colonial Theater, the Barrington Stage Company and the Pittsfield Suns. There is a strong creative presence in the city, a number of schools and

community facilities which add to its sense of vibrancy, especially in the downtown area. It offers living opportunities within walking distance of job opportunities, all within a short drive to outdoor activities such as boating, skiing and golfing.

Pittsfield is the Berkshires' Central City

Pittsfield is centrally located in the Berkshire region. It is nearly twenty miles from both Great Barrington and North Adams, and roughly forty miles from both Albany, New York and Northampton, Massachusetts. It is 137 miles from Boston, and 157 miles from New York City. Pittsfield is also an official "Gateway City" as designated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, meaning it is considered to be the economic anchor for the Berkshire region.

Existing Intermodal Transportation Connections

The Intermodal Center already provides local, regional and national transportation options through the BRTA bus service, the Peter Pan passenger bus service, and the Amtrak Lake Shore service. The proposed passenger rail service would provide another transportation option at the Intermodal Center.

Equity and Access

The city is encouraged to connect the Westside and Morningside neighborhoods to the transportation system to increase mobility and access to job opportunities. Both neighborhoods are identified as Environmental Justice areas in the City.

Future Reuse of Vacant Spaces Present Unique Redevelopment Opportunities

Developers and the City of Pittsfield will need to consider how the proposed re-use and design will support the area as an appealing destination and a place comfortable for visitors to navigate and explore.

Challenges to Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Uncertain Market Demand for Real Estate

The vacancy rate in rental units within the Intermodal Center Station Area could suggest low demand, as could the availability of existing commercial and residential spaces.

Increased Traffic Could Impact Circulation

The anticipated ridership for the Intermodal Center is 180,340, and half of this figure is estimated to be departures. The possibility exists that that there will be increased traffic to, from and around the Intermodal Center as southbound riders are dropped off or utilize short term and/or long term parking.

Gateway or Transition Areas Warrant Improvement

Visitors traveling north into the station area are greeted with a pleasant streetscape along South Street and Park Square. The Berkshire Museum, the historic church and the Colonial Theater enhance this area as well as they attract activity and offer an interesting architectural composition. Other gateway or transition areas into the Intermodal Center Station Area could use improvement to better welcome visitors, particularly for those traveling south on Route 7 and west on Route 9. West Housatonic Street offers a pleasant environment around Clapp Park, but could also use some landscaping and design treatments to make the area closer to the Intermodal Center more appealing and attractive.

Physical Connections to Peripheral Neighborhoods Need Enhancement

While North Street, First Street, Tyler Street, McKay Street, Center Street and Columbus Avenue offer strong pedestrian access and connectivity, the

local streets within the area that provide connection between the different neighborhoods within the station area could use pedestrian improvements to better connect residents safely to the anchors and opportunities within the downtown area.

Lack of Orientation or Wayfinding Tools along McKay Street and Columbus Avenue

While the Pittsfield Visitors Bureau is located within the Intermodal Center, passengers alighting from their train on Depot Street have little in the way of signage to help orient them or direct them to the hotels, restaurants or theaters within the station area—which may be an impetus for why they have chosen to travel to Pittsfield.

Recommendations

1. The City is encouraged to undertake a market study of the station area, particularly in the ¼ mile station area, to evaluate the development potential for residential and commercial properties. This should be aligned with the city's housing and economic development goals and ongoing initiatives.
2. The City is encouraged to continue working with BRPC, MassDOT and the Berkshire MPO to conduct traffic studies and maintain a quality level of service within and around the station area and to implement any identified improvements.
3. The city is encouraged to continue implementing complete street components into street or road projects in the station area.
4. The City is encouraged to take special care in the planning and development of its gateway



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or transition areas, as these are the first areas of the city visitors see and experience.

5. Continued maintenance of downtown and neighborhood connections is encouraged. One recent example is the work conducted by BRPC, Be Well Berkshires and volunteers from the Tyler Street Business Group: this cooperative effort evaluated walkability in the Morningside neighborhood and identified areas that require special attention and maintenance, such as the area around Berkshire Medical Center, connections to Springside Park, and Fenn Street, which connects the downtown area to the East Street commercial district.
6. As stated in the Pittsfield Master Plan, the city would benefit from creating a welcoming atmosphere and experience for visitors. Working with local businesses and partners, the city is encouraged to develop a wayfinding system to help orient and guide visitors around the city. Developing a wayfinding system to assist drivers in finding parking is also important. Parking that is difficult to locate is often underutilized. Urban design and way finding will be important tools in making the station area a pleasant and safe place for visitors.
7. The City is encouraged to work with stakeholders and partners to identify land and building uses they feel will support passenger rail service and vice versa, and work to adjust zoning language to suit the collective desire. One such example is a Transit Oriented Development Overlay District, which can lay out very thorough standards for site plans, design and building dimensions in a very specific area. The two overlay districts within the station area are supportive of uses considered to be strong candidates for TOD already.
8. The City is encouraged to work with local and regional stakeholders and community groups to ensure that development within and around the station area enhances equity and opportunity through sustained or improved access and opportunity.
9. Continuing to work with Downtown, Inc. to help maintain and improve the station area through maintenance, repair and beautification efforts is a way in which the City could work with business and property owners to continue place-making efforts within the station area.
10. Consider other incentives to attract TOD supportive businesses into the area, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
11. Consider expanding the 40R Smart Growth Overlay District to encourage mixed income housing development in the station area.
12. Work to maintain and beautify city parks, and to create programming or activities to keep them busy and appealing to visitors and residents alike.
13. In terms of transportation connectivity, the City is encouraged to work with BRTA, the passenger rail service and both local and regional businesses to address “last mile” challenges to ensure passengers can get from the station to their destination.

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Downtown Lee Station Station Area Context

The Downtown Lee Station Area is located just minutes from the Massachusetts Turnpike and includes the central Berkshire's Route 20 corridor. The Downtown Lee passenger rail station is nestled within a bustling downtown amongst both commercial and residential properties. In addition to dense offerings of retail and commercial businesses, food service, and accommodations, this area also supports a medium/high residential density. This station would serve as a town center station, providing immediate access to the area's many amenities. Downtown Lee is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The former Lee Depot, also on the National Register, is currently a popular restaurant. Additionally, the downtown area has an existing regional bus route which stops hourly (Monday through Saturday) in downtown Lee.

There are two locations identified as potential passenger rail station sites. The first location uses mostly municipal property on Railroad Street and Consolati Way. The second scenario uses two privately owned parcels on Railroad Street.

The station area was identified by creating a ¼ and ½ mile buffer from the proposed station parcels. The downtown station area's ½ mile boundary is bound by West Park Street in the south and Spring Street on the west. Debra Avenue marks the northern boundary and the Ferncliff Reservation is on the eastern boundary. The ½ mile station area has medium density residential housing largely located along Prospect Street, Summer Street, and Center Street. There are commercial uses along Route 20, a golf course in the south west of the station area and large tracts of forest

throughout. Figure 7.6 shows the ¼ and ½ mile radius of the proposed station and includes a locus map demonstrating the proposed station area's relationship to Lee. The station area is roughly 11 miles from the Pittsfield Intermodal Center, 10 miles from Downtown Great Barrington, and 21 miles from the state line in Sheffield.

Station Area Vision

According to the town's Master Plan (2000), Community Development Plan (2004), and Downtown Plan, the overarching vision for the town is to "carefully guide and manage change to ensure Lee preserves its present combination of outstand-

ing natural assets, traditional New England atmosphere, and small town community spirit that makes it a special place. Residents, leaders and organizations should continue to promote social diversity and economic prosperity while protecting and preserving important historic, cultural, and environmental features. The community must also take any steps necessary to continue to provide high quality services, facilities and opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of present and future residents" (Community Vision, Community Development Plan).

While community planning documents do not specifically include passenger rail, the Master Plan identifies preservation and vitality of the downtown area as a primary goal, along with the enhancement of pedestrian and public spaces. A demand for downtown office space is noted, leading to a recommendation of promoting mixed uses, including housing, office space, and retail goods and services. Parking and transportation in the downtown area is noted to be a challenge to economic development within the downtown area. Lee's Downtown Plan recommended that the town continue to "encourage innovation in business/residential development in a way which preserves its heritage as a working town with bucolic vistas and a 'real' downtown which serves as a community center of commerce, recreation, etc."

The following are goals and strategies included in the town's Master Plan that are relevant to the station area vision.

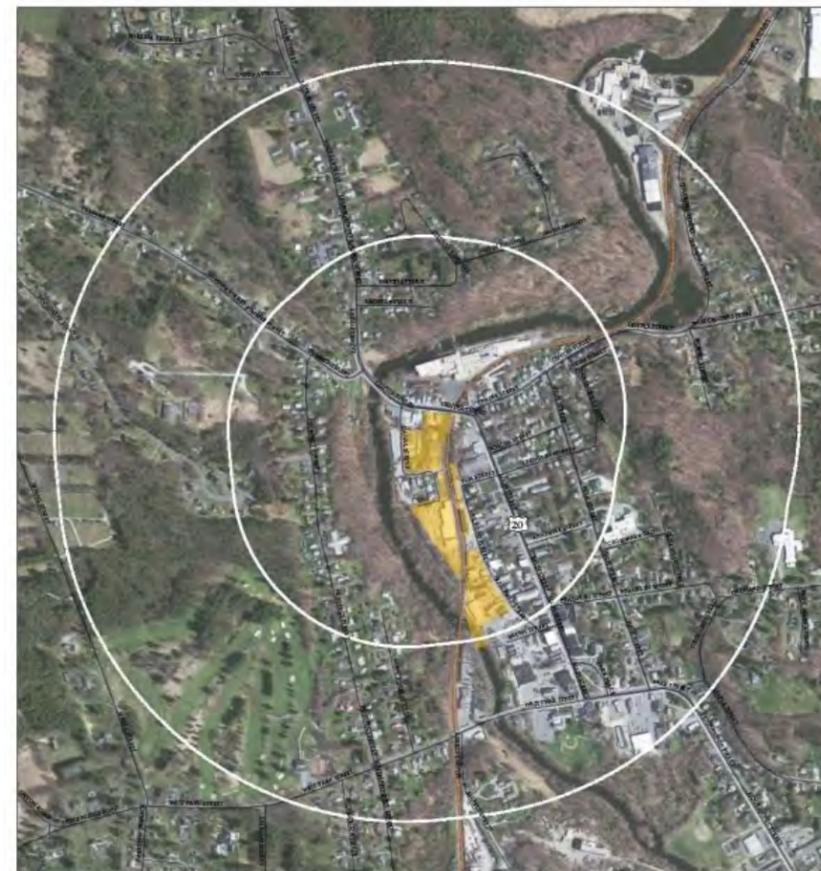
Economic Development

- Maintain and enhance a healthy downtown, preferentially through a variety of appropriate mixed-uses.
- Preserve Lee's resident-friendly downtown area.
- Continue downtown based efforts of streetscaping, ... tourism development.
- Enhance downtown's visual appeal through building renovation/construction with design assistance and a strong but cooperative design review.

Growth Management

- Utilize and redevelop non-residential areas for economic and community purposes.

Figure 7.6: Downtown Lee Station Area



Downtown Lee Station Area

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History and Cultural Resources

- Preserve the downtown area's mixed use heritage and vitality.
- Support efforts to restore building and enhance park sites in the downtown area.
- Continue to include broad representation downtown efforts to ensure downtown continues to serve residents and retains its local flavor.

Sustainable Land Use

- Promote the preservation and utilization of developed residential areas to keep them healthy and vibrant.
- More closely integrate social needs, transportation means and land use by focusing public investment on repair/enhancement of existing infrastructure from the pedestrian center outward.

Extrapolating from the town's goals and strategies identified in the planning documents, the vision for the Downtown Lee Station is as follows: Located in the heart of a bustling New England town, the Downtown Lee Station celebrates the town's heritage and vitality. The location offers easy pedestrian access to commercial and retail shops, as well as dining and accommodations available immediately in the downtown commercial corridor but also along Route 20 south of the downtown area. The Town, which has traditionally served as the "Gateway to the Berkshires", connects visitors to their Berkshire destinations. Redevelopment and new development fit in with the existing character of the town center. The Town and partners work cooperatively to provide mixed income housing and promote continued mixed use of the downtown area. Efforts are

made to include activities into the station area that support passenger rail and vice versa.

Station Area Existing Conditions

Demographics

An estimated 2,569 people live within the downtown station area in Lee, comprising more than 40% of the town's total population. Downtown is the most densely populated area along the rail corridor in Lee and three out of every ten people in Lee live within ¼ mile radius of the proposed station. There are slightly more families than non-families living downtown, and more households with seniors than households with children. The town's Senior Center is located downtown, along with two senior housing complexes. With more seniors living downtown, connectivity and accessibility in public spaces are particularly important. Additionally, one out of five family households downtown have children under 18. The age composition of the station area is similar to the town, although there are more 15-29 year olds living in the downtown area. While the station area is predominantly White, more than half of the town's Hispanic/Latino population lives downtown.

Median household income in the station area is lower than in the town: \$42,031 versus \$53,467. Per capita income, at approximately \$29,000 is similar for the two areas. Households in Lee earn more than their downtown counterparts across all age groups, although the smallest difference is among the senior population. There is greater reliance on Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the downtown area versus the town as a whole: 16.1% versus 8.8% for Supplementary Security Income and 13.4% versus 6.8% for food stamps.

Housing Characteristics

The downtown station area contains nearly 600 single-family homes. While there is housing diversity throughout town, a higher percentage of multi-family dwellings are located downtown. There are 420 multi-family housing units downtown. All of the properties with 5-9 housing units and nearly half of the 20+ unit dwellings are downtown. The station area has a much lower percentage of seasonal housing units (3% versus 12% in the town), suggesting that downtown Lee is a year-round community. The percentage of owner-occupied housing is lower in the station area (48% versus 66%), and the percentage of renter-occupied units is higher in the station area (53% versus 34%). The high occupancy rates indicate a demand for rental and ownership housing in the downtown. The higher percentage of rental housing might be due in part to the large number of non-family households that live in the downtown area. In the downtown area, owner-occupied households are larger, while renter-occupied households are larger in the town as a whole. New housing developments downtown might consider rental units with more bedrooms to accommodate larger and non-family households. If demand for rental units increases within the downtown station area, the town may need to continue efforts to expand and maintain affordability within the town center. The station area has a significantly older housing stock, with almost 50% built prior to 1939 (versus 27% for the town). While there has been new development within the past several decades, little of that has taken place in recent years. The majority of residents living in downtown Lee moved into the neighborhood between 2000 and 2009 (50%) or between 1990 and 1999 (20%). Lee, known as the "Gateway to the Berkshires", has attracted many new residents to

the downtown area in particular. Increased demand associated with a passenger rail station could cause an increase in housing costs and additional turnover if costs become unaffordable for some residents.

Downtown housing values range from \$150,000-299,999, while across town homes are more likely to be valued at \$200,000-\$499,999. According to Trulia, only four residential homes have been sold in the station area since October 2013, with the most recent sale happening in February 2014. The single-family homes have sold for \$220,000-\$250,000 and the multi-family homes have sold for \$120,000-\$685,000. This is comparable to census data regarding local housing values. Historically, properties located north of downtown have sold for a higher amount, followed by properties west of Route 20. Within the ½ mile station area, properties east of Route 20 have sold for the lowest amount. The current real estate market (using data from Trulia) is comprised of a mix of mostly residential and only a few commercial properties. There are no newly constructed homes on the market. Properties range from \$75,000-\$530,000 with an average of \$118/ft² for residential and \$91/ft² for commercial properties, although price per square foot varies significantly for both residential and commercial. Many of the properties have been on the market for a long time, and five downtown properties have been on the market for more than six months.

More than half of all renters and 33% of homeowners with a mortgage experience a housing cost burden. Spending thirty percent or more of household income toward housing is considered a housing cost burden. Downtown Lee residents without a mortgage spend a median of \$618

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monthly on housing costs and 33% of residents experience a housing cost burden. Housing affordability is a challenge in Lee, particularly for renters. Whether they reside downtown or elsewhere in town, 60% of renters experience a housing cost burden.

Land Use

The downtown station area contains 593 acres, the majority of which is in residential or forest use. Nearly twenty percent (or 116 acres) of the downtown station area is composed of medium density residential. Approximately eight percent of the residential area is high density, and five percent is divided among multi-family housing, low and very low density residential. High density residential is concentrated east of Main Street. The 48.5 acres or 8.2% of area in commercial use is focused in the town center, along Main Street and Route 20. One third of the downtown station area contains forest cover. Fifteen acres are in industrial use, and these sites are located along the Housatonic River.

There are 59 acres of land in the station area that are considered to be developable. The developable land includes mostly residentially-zoned parcels, the smallest being 0.01 acres and the largest at 8.1 acres. A very small percentage of the aforementioned developable land is located within the ¼ mile station area. Nearly half of the land is adjacent to or within an already existing park (Golden Hill). The lack of vacant or underused land within the ¼ mile station area may provide challenges for new development. Infill and redevelopment

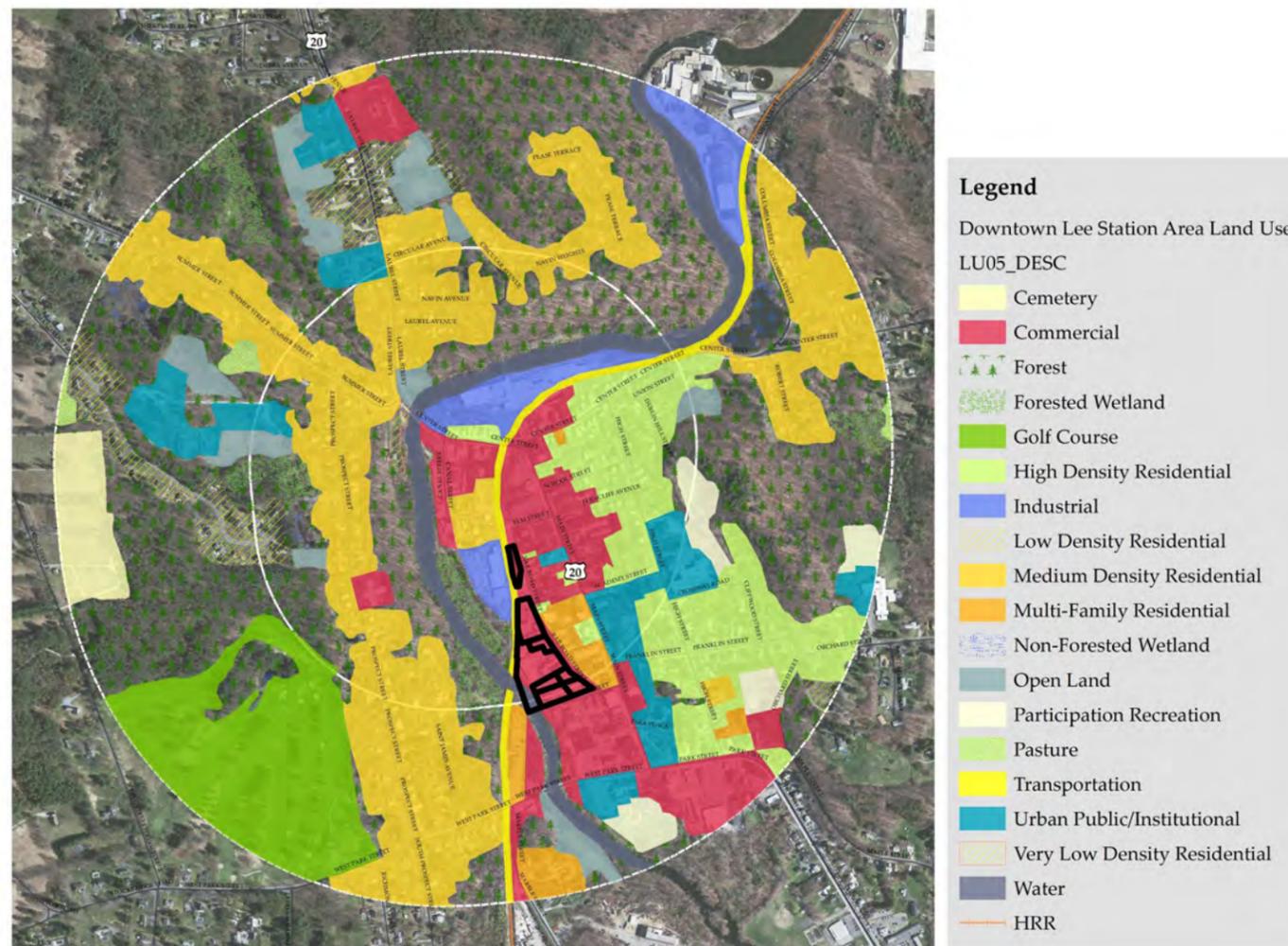
of existing properties may prove to be a more viable option and is encouraged by community planning documents and town policies.

The station area includes two former papers mills that are available for redevelopment. The Eagle mill located within the 1/4 mile boundary in the northern part of the downtown area is in the planning stages of development. The conceptual designs include workforce housing, a restaurant, retail space, community center and a possible hotel. The Columbia Mill located partially within the ½ mile boundary was recently acquired by Niagara Worldwide. Niagara is working

with local officials, other developers and prospective tenants to reuse the Columbia Mill.

There are five parks and recreation areas in the downtown station area. There is a small town park on the town green next to the Town Hall and a Veterans Memorial Park next to the library. On the southern edge of station area, just south of West Park Street, there is a baseball field. Ferncliff Reservation is a large passive recreation area located on the eastern edge of the station area. It is reached via Dublin Hill, Cliffwood, Robert and Orchard Streets. The town forest at

Figure 7.7: Land Use within the Downtown Lee Station Area



	Acres	Percent
Residential		
High Density Residential	46.1	7.8%
Medium Density Residential	115.9	19.5%
Low Density Residential	20.1	3.4%
Very Low Density Residential	0.8	0.1%
Multi-Family Residential	9	1.5%
Subtotal	191.9	32.3%
Forest	191.2	32.3%
Commercial	48.5	8.2%
Golf Course	38.6	6.5%
Urban Public/Institution	27.3	4.6%
Water	18.6	3.1%
Open Land	17.6	3%
Industrial	15.1	2.6%
Forested Wetland	12.7	2.1%
Cemetery	9.4	1.6%
Participation Recreation	8.6	1.4%
Transportation	5.9	1%
Non-Forested Wetland	5.6	0.9%
Pasture	2	0.3%
Total	592.9	100%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Data for Lee

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Golden Hill, located on the north-eastern edge of the station area, allows for passive recreation.

The Housatonic River cuts through the downtown station area from the north. Due to the town's location along the Housatonic River, at the base of several mountain streams, flood hazard mitigation is a concern for the town of Lee. The western portion of the station area along the Housatonic River is within the FEMA 100 year floodplain. The southern end of Main Street, which contains a commercial district and historic properties, has been known to flood. The area along the

Housatonic River contains a Wetland Resource Area and Buffer, Riverfront Protection Area, and Habitat for Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern Species.

The station area is part of the Lower Main Street Historic District.

Zoning

The zoning within the ½ mile station area reflects the mixed used nature of the downtown. (See Figure 7.9). Residential and commercial uses are the predominant uses allowed by right in the station area. Downtown Lee has a commercial urban core

surrounded by different layers of residential uses. Sixty-five percent of the land within the ½ mile station area is zoned residential. There are five types of residential zoning (Residential 20, Residential 30, Conservation Residential, Residential Agricultural, and Residential Multiple Dwellings), with major differences regarding lot size, allowance of multiple residences, and encouragement of conservation/agriculture. Another 15% encompasses the Downtown Commercial Business Corridor.

The potential station sites are located in the Downtown Commercial Business Corridor District. The Downtown Commercial Business Corridor District (DCBC) is a district intended to “preserve the architectural and commercial character of the historic downtown from Park Street through Center Street”. The District allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses. The following uses are allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board: hotel/motel, restaurant, and retail business. Fast food establishments are specifically prohibited. Currently, a passenger rail station is not indicated as a permitted use in this district, and zoning bylaws would need to be updated to allow for a passenger rail station unless the entity constructing the station is exempt from local zoning.

There is an additional Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD), intended to provide for the re-use of existing buildings, including private buildings, municipal buildings, and schools. The AROD will “allow for the reuse of existing buildings ... throughout the town to increase the town's overall tax base, create employment opportunities and ensure effi-

cient use of municipal services so as to not create an undue burden on them.” It will also “ensure that such uses are compatible with their surroundings” and will “maximize the use of the site's natural characteristics.” Dimensional requirements are guided by the underlying zoning, though the Special Permit Granting Authority may waive requirements in certain situations.

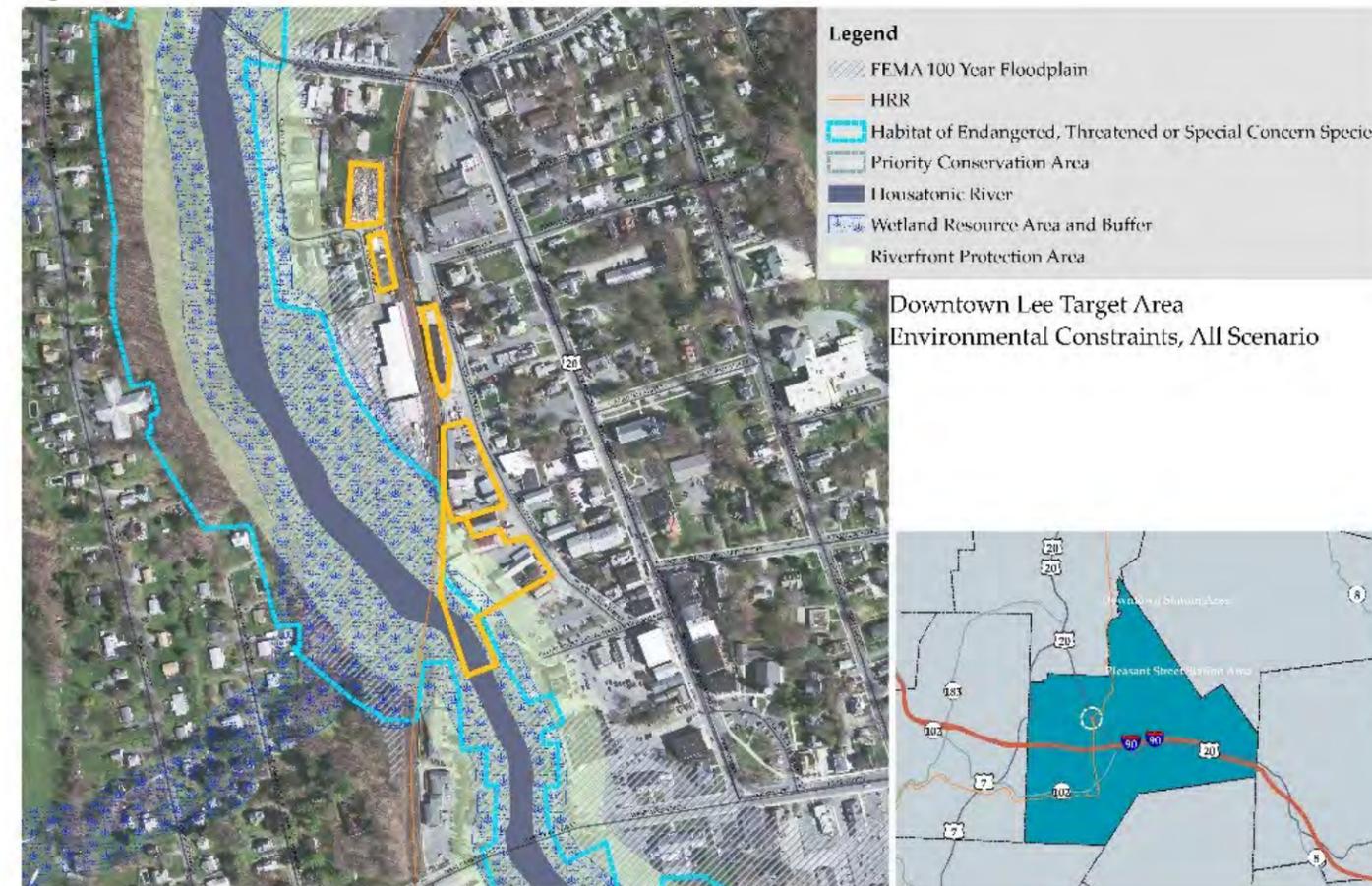
Transportation

Regional transit service is currently provided in Downtown Lee by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). BRTA leadership recognizes the benefits which can be derived from coordinating their operational schedule to coincide with arrivals/departures of the passenger rail schedule. In doing so, automobile dependency is reduced along with a reduction of mobile source and green house gas emissions as well as less traffic in the downtown area. It is important to note that the passenger rail service can also serve to enhance local transit options allowing for travel between southern Berkshire County and Pittsfield. Additionally, “local” and “private” shuttles can be offered for disembarking passengers traveling to local tourist spots. Car rental and car sharing services should be provided within a ¼ mile if it is not feasible to accommodate them on the station site.

Access, Circulation, Parking and Connectivity

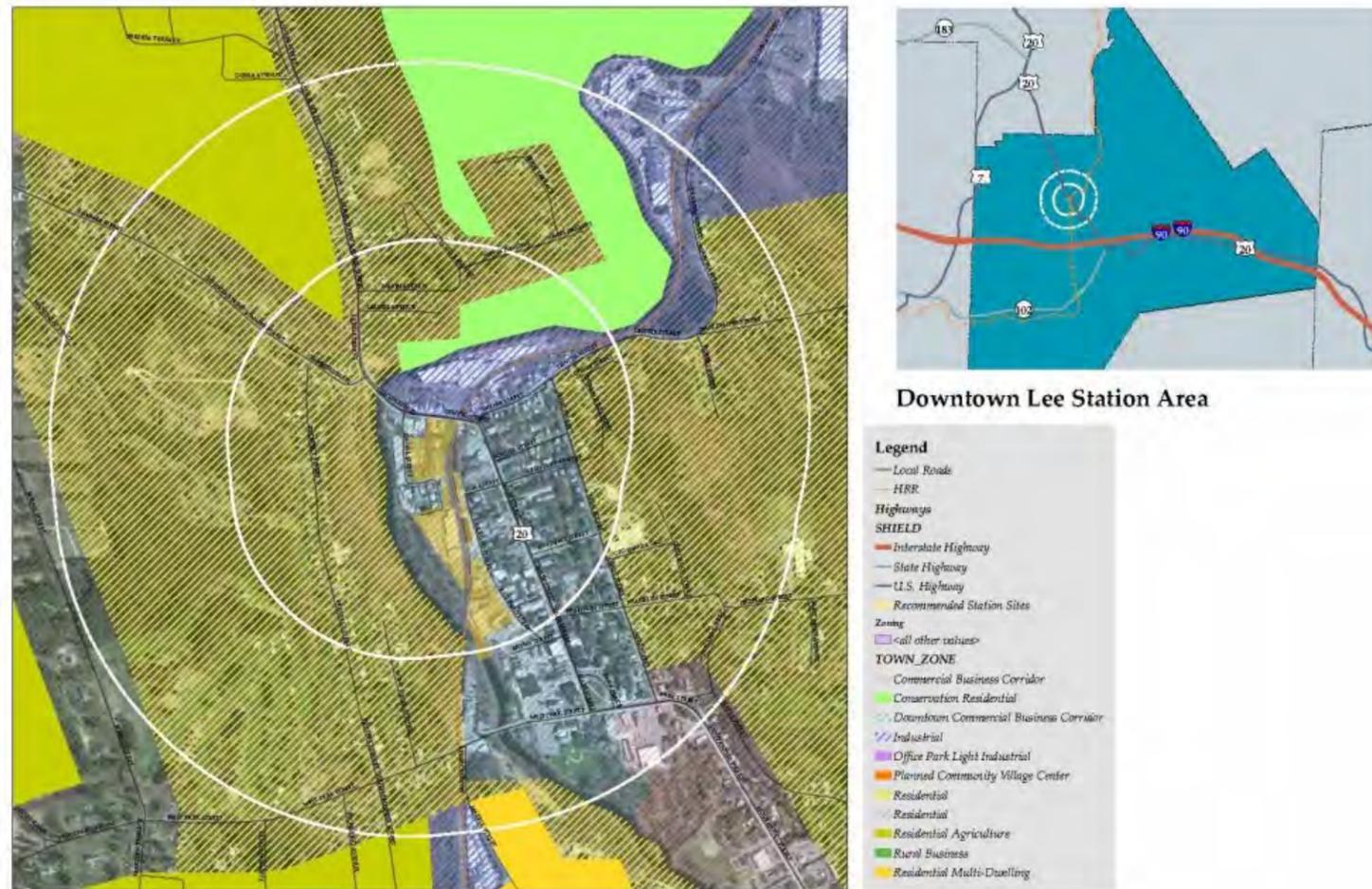
Route 20 is the most significant north/south arterial highway that accesses central and northern Berkshire County from the Massachusetts Turnpike (exit 2). It is this same corridor that will also provide vehicular access to the passenger rail station in downtown Lee and to surrounding communities to the east. Due to the importance of this corridor, it has undergone a number of transpor-

Figure 7.8: Environmental Constraints in the Downtown Lee Station Area



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Figure 7.9: Zoning within the Downtown Lee Station Area



District	Acres	Percent
Residential 20 District	125.3	65%
Downtown Commercial Business Corridor	89.1	15%
Conservation-Residential District	45.4	7.7%
Industrial District	35.7	6%
Residential-Agricultural District	26.4	4.5%
Commercial Business Corridor	8.7	1.5%
Residential-Multiple Dwelling District	2.5	0.4%
Total	593	100%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Data for Lee

tation evaluations within the past ten years. Although overall traffic volumes are actually decreasing on Route 20, the percentage of trucks has increased. The *Town of Lee Downtown Truck Traffic Analysis* (BRPC 2012) indicates that the average percentage of truck traffic at the study's seven stations, 11.7%, is nearly twice the region's 5.9% historic average. This high volume of trucks creates congestion and impacts travel time. With the addition of a passenger rail station in downtown Lee, the potential exists that traffic congestion would increase. The ability to mitigate traffic impacts along this corridor may be diminished due to right of

way constraints. It is critical that circulation within the downtown and access to the site be fully evaluated prior to final design. Based upon observation of this corridor during the peak travel period, the delay associated with the installation of a single traffic signal may impact travel time from current levels.

The *Downtown Lee 2010 Parking Utilization Study and Management Strategies* (BRPC, 2010) revealed that adequate parking does exist within the downtown area. Unfortunately, the location of available parking is not typically in proximity to downtown businesses and visitor destinations. (See Figure 7.10). With the construction of a passenger rail station in downtown Lee, the

potential exists that parking demand would increase and in turn, deplete the available parking which currently exists. The final design of the station facility should include adequate parking to meet operational demands for a local station. With respect to complimentary redevelopment activities that would increase housing and commercial land uses, options for shared use parking could be identified and implemented within the downtown area. Local transit, including taxicab service, can also lessen the need for parking.

There are sidewalks on most streets in the station area, although improvements may be needed surrounding the station parcel. Main Street has the best walkability and bikeability, with wide sidewalks, ample crosswalks, and dedicated bike lanes. (See Figure 7.11).

The proposed Lee Bikeway is envisioned as a 6.7-mile, multi-modal path that travels through the Town of Lee, parallel to the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway and the Housatonic River. The route runs on-road along Route 102 from the Stockbridge town line to the intersection of Route 102, Tyringham Road and Route 20. From here the bike path transitions off-road for approximately one mile along the Housatonic River until it reaches the Lee Bank on West Park Street, just south of the proposed site. This portion of the route contains commercial and recreational land uses. From West Park Street, the bikeway continues through the Lee's central business district and the businesses along Railroad Street and Canal Street through an area designated for future redevelopment including the potential Lee station sites. The bikeway then follows the river northward to the Lenox Dale and the October Mountain State Forest. The bikeway location north of Park Street is being determined in a project which is just getting underway and the proposed station location should be a prime consideration in determining the location of the bikeway.

Public Infrastructure

The Downtown Station Area is served by public water and sewer. In terms of capacity for increased use the town is seeking state funding for a major municipal water system upgrade to

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Figure 7.10: Parking in Downtown Lee



Figure 7.11: Sidewalks in the Downtown Lee Station Area



Figure 7.12: Public Infrastructure in the Downtown Lee Station Area



replace the main water supply line from its reservoir to the south end of Main Street to facilitate the redevelopment of the former paper mills.

Opportunities for Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Support Current Redevelopment Efforts Downtown
 The downtown location would support prior and current investment/redevelopment efforts in Lee's downtown area (including efforts involving the Eagle Mill, immediately to the north of the station area).

Downtown Area with Dense Population, Retail Activity, Culture, History and Existing Transit

The downtown location provides ample amenities, recreation and shopping/dining opportunities within a five minute walk. For intra-county travelers, there is a concentration of employers in the downtown which could provide residents with transportation access to jobs.

Connectivity

Drivers can gain access to the station via the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) and Route 20. The station area is served by the BRTA and has local pedestrian connectivity.

Access to Existing Infrastructure

There is access to existing infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer) although the main water line is in need of an upgrade.

Lee is Supportive of Passenger Rail Service

Lee's leadership has been supportive of a passenger rail station in town and is supportive of the return of passenger rail service. Town officials understand the benefits and challenges of locating a station in the downtown area.



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A Downtown Area Station in Lee Supports Regional Development Goals

Supporting transportation system enhancements in an existing activity area is supported by the goals and policies of the Sustainable Berkshires regional plan. Improvements that would benefit passengers, such as enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, would also support the goals of the regional plan, as would increasing housing opportunity in an existing activity center while also supporting tourism and business.

Lee Has Existing Zoning, Land Use and Transit to Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Lee's existing zoning bylaws and its Downtown Business Corridor District support uses and development that are considered cornerstones of TOD. Existing land use also corresponds with the underlying goals of TOD. The station area is served by existing transit service via the BRTA, which is fundamental to the success of TOD and expanding transit options for residents and visitors.

Challenges to Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Spatial Constraints of a Built-Out Downtown

The downtown area is spatially constrained, especially near the railroad tracks. The area is largely built out and it might be difficult to piece together parcels, making site control and new development a challenge. This could be ameliorated in part with adaptive reuse and redevelopment of existing sites.

Traffic & Circulation in the Downtown Area

A rail station has the potential to increase traffic activity. The station would likely be accessed via Main Street/Route 20. Route 20 is the primary

and most direct route through downtown, which could potentially pose a challenge in terms of traffic congestion and maintaining an adequate level of service.

Recommendations

1. The Town is encouraged to work with the Housatonic Railroad Company, Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, Peter Pan bus company, owners of popular tourist destinations and accommodations, and other interested parties to determine how best to connect to local transportation systems to get patrons conveniently and comfortably to their desired destinations. Techniques to reduce the amount of parking necessary should be considered. This should also include wayfinding signage and any other necessary amenities to allow transit users to comfortably and conveniently reach Main Street or other desired destinations.
2. The Town is encouraged to continue to work with BRPC and the Berkshire MPO to conduct traffic studies and maintain a quality level of service within and around the station area. Thought should be given in ongoing projects as to how they will impact peak circulation flow downtown. Additional considerations should be given to how the at-grade public crossing at the north end of downtown will affect traffic flow and safety concerns. The Town should consider implementing the recommendations contained in the traffic study.
3. The Town is encouraged to undertake a market study for the station area, particularly in the ¼ mile station area. The study should evaluate the development and redevelopment potential for residential and commercial prop-

erties. This should be aligned with the town's housing and economic development goals and ongoing initiatives.

4. The Town is encouraged to consider adopting a Business Improvement District to help maintain and improve the station area through maintenance, repair and beautification efforts.
5. The Town is encouraged to maintain the strong pedestrian network already in place through ongoing monitoring, maintenance and repair.

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Downtown Great Barrington Station

Station Area Context

The historic, downtown passenger rail station in Great Barrington is located on Castle Lane, just behind the community's town hall. It is accessible via Taconic Avenue and Castle Street. The station site itself has no fatal flaws such as wetlands, open water, steep slopes over 15% or permanently pro-

tected open space. Nor does it have any environmental constraints such as FEMA 100 year floodplain, wetland resource area buffer, riverfront protection area, area of critical environmental concern, NHESP Priority Conservation Area, or Habitat for Rare, Endangered or Threatened Species.

The station area was identified by creating a ¼ and ½ mile buffer from the historic station parcel. It is defined by the following boundaries: from the south, it begins at the initial at-grade rail crossing

at West Street and Maple Avenue, spanning to Lake Mansfield, Knob Hill and around Gas House Lane to the north. From east to west, it spans from Quarry and East Street to past Berkshire Heights Road. Figure 7.13 demonstrates the ¼ and ½ mile radius of the historic station as well as a locus map demonstrating the historic station and station area's relationship to Great Barrington. The station area is roughly 10 miles from the Sheffield State Line site, 11 miles from Downtown Lee, and just over 20 miles from the Pittsfield Intermodal Center.

vice. The first strategy is to work in cooperation with Housatonic Railroad and regional, state and federal entities in railroad planning and to support applications for funding and lobby government officials when appropriate. The second strategy promotes pedestrian and bike connections, bus connections and parking accommodation around the rail station services. In general, the Downtown Station Area is considered a priority area for both development and redevelopment.

The following are goals and strategies included in the Great Barrington Master Plan that are relevant to the station area vision.

Figure 7.13: Downtown Great Barrington Station Area



Station Area Vision

According to the Great Barrington 2013 Master Plan, the vision for the station area is a vibrant residential and commercial mixed use area with strong pedestrian and bicycling connections. Way-finding signs are present throughout the station area to guide pedestrians from the passenger rail station to the downtown area and throughout the downtown area. The parking demand in the station area is addressed by a mix of public and private surface parking (no parking structure is envisioned) with shared parking encouraged. The area retains the features and character that make Great Barrington's downtown an appealing place to visit and spend time while accommodating a mix of uses and transit.

The 2013 Great Barrington Master Plan identifies two target strategies regarding passenger rail ser-

Land Use

- Land Use Goal 2, Strategy D.5: Plan proactively for the possibility of restored passenger railroad service, attending to parking and the needs for associated services.
- Land Use Goal 2, Strategy D.6: Work in concert with the Chamber of Commerce and private landowners to address parking needs, including improving directional signage and connecting parking lots with signage and landscaping. A parking structure is not envisioned.

Economic Development

- Economic Development Goal 7: Reestablish passenger train connections between the Berkshires and New York City
- Strategy ED 7.1: Lobby for and support Housatonic Railroad's efforts.
- Strategy ED 7.2: Incorporate railroad passenger support infrastructure, including stations, parking, and other services, into plans for downtown.

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Transportation

- Transportation Goal 6: Reestablish passenger train service connecting Berkshire County to New York City.
- Strategy TR 6.1: Cooperate with the Housatonic Railroad and regional, state and federal entities in railroad planning. Support applications for funding and lobby government officials when appropriate.
- Strategy TR 6.2: Proactively plan for rail station services like pedestrian and bike connections, bus connections and parking accommodation.

The land use vision describes Great Barrington's downtown as a regional hub for business, employment, entertainment and civic life with the goals of redeveloping dilapidated properties, enhancing landscaping, protecting historic character, promoting mixed uses, shared parking and a variety of employment and housing options, and connecting neighborhoods with the river, parks and open spaces. Strong pedestrian connectivity around a passenger rail station was also identified as a priority amenity or service, and a priority transportation option.

Station Area Existing Conditions

Demographics

An estimated 2,782 people live within the downtown station area in Great Barrington. Though the station area is physically defined by the Main Street commercial corridor, nearly forty percent of the town's population lives within a ½ mile of the recommended station location. The station area has fewer family households than the remaining area of Great Barrington and a greater percentage of householders living alone. The median age is

43.6 years old, and the average household size is just over 2. Twenty-two percent of the households have children under eighteen. The Downtown Station Area is predominately White. As in Lee and Pittsfield, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents is higher than the county median. In the station area, the Hispanic population is 7.7%. Most residents within the station area have access to at least one car and nearly twelve percent lack access to a car. Median household income in the station area is lower than the remaining area of Great Barrington: \$45,108 versus \$50,882 respectively. Median household income in the station area is notably lower in the age bracket of 45-64 years old and is slightly lower in the 65 or older age category.

Housing Characteristics

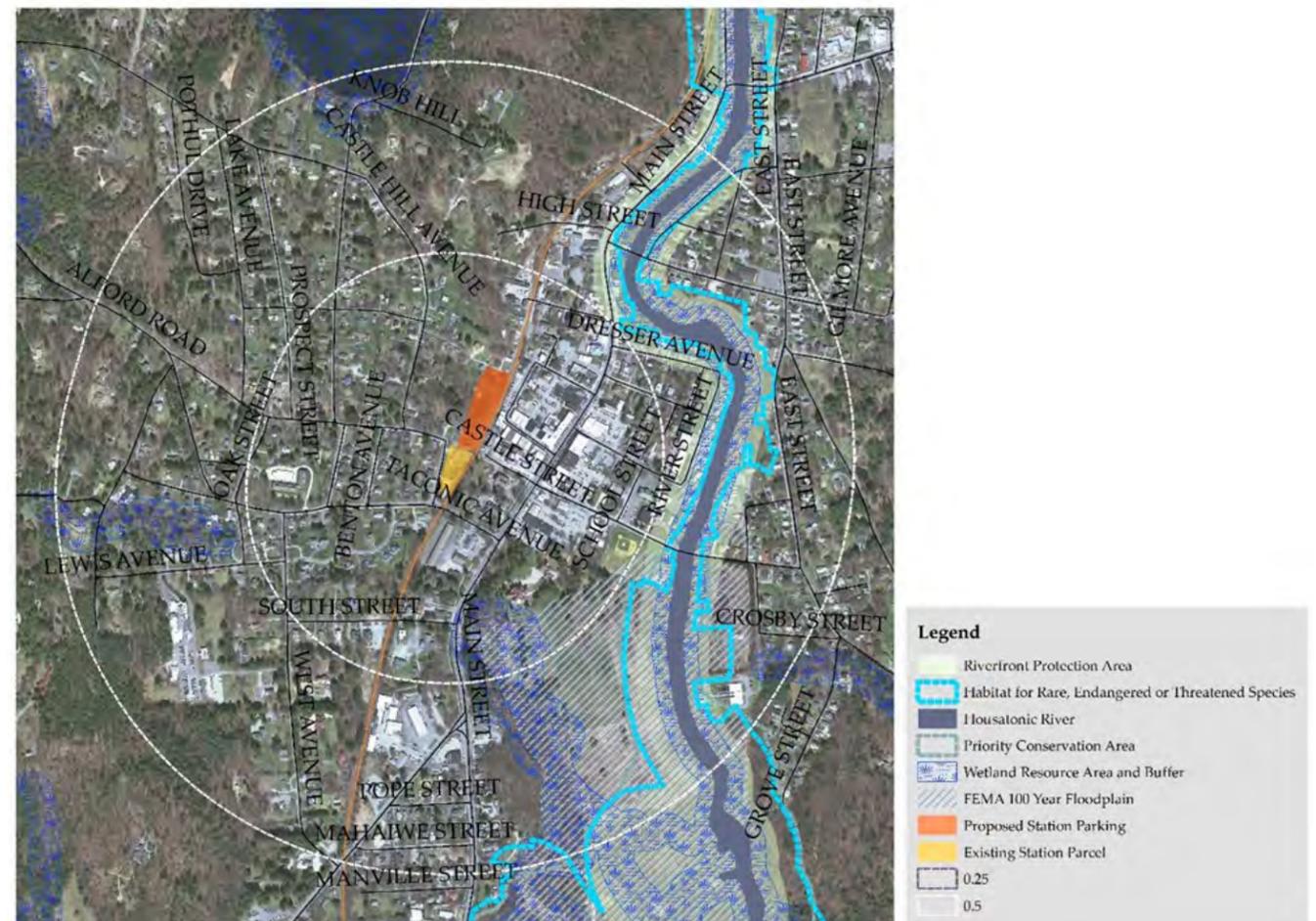
There is a greater percentage of rental units within the Downtown Station Area, with low rental and low owner vacancy rates, indicating high demand for rental and ownership opportunities. More residents rent than own within the station area. The homes in the station area tend to be larger residences—both older and newer units designed or renovated to accommodate apartments or more than one family. The percentage of multiple unit residences in the station area is double that of the remaining area of Great Barrington. This correlates with the greater percentage of renter-occupied units within the station area. Housing stock in the area is older, with much of it being at least seventy-five years old. The majority of residential units are between two to three bedrooms. The median owner-occupied home value in the station area is \$328,400. A housing cost burden is noted for owners and renters. Great Barrington in general has one of the highest percentages of residents burdened by housing costs. There is an affordability gap of \$138,432—the difference be-

tween what a median income household can afford and the median sales price of a single family home. This gap is considered prohibitive. A majority of home owners within the station area with a mortgage and renters indicate spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.

Trulia lists twelve recently sold homes in the Downtown Station Area. These homes sold for a range of between \$156,500 and \$930,000. Trulia lists eighty-four properties for sale in or near the Downtown Station Area. These include a condo-

minium selling for \$175,000, a former dry cleaner business selling for \$165,000 and single family homes ranging from \$239,000 to nearly \$600,000 on Main Street and in the Castle Hill neighborhood. There is one single family home for sale on Berkshire Heights Road with a posted sales price of \$1,398,000. This indicates there is a mix of property for sale: multi-family residences, single-family residences, commercial properties and developable parcels. There are also two properties within the station area that have been identified as potential mixed-income housing developments: the former New England Log Homes site and for-

Figure 7.14: Environmental Constraints in Downtown Great Barrington



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mer Searles-Bryant complex, both on Bridge Street.

Land Use

The Downtown Station Area contains approximately 558 acres. The commercial hub of Main Street is focused fairly tightly along Route 7, flanked by a medium density residential neighborhood to the west and a neighborhood of high density, multi-family and medium density residential to the east of the Main Street commercial

corridor. The majority of the Downtown Station Area consists of residential use. Nearly twenty-seven percent (or 247 acres) of the Downtown Station Area is composed of medium density residential uses. Nearly seven percent of the residential area is high density, nearly five percent is multi-family housing, and nearly two percent is very low density residential. All types of residential use are mostly concentrated to the east and north of the existing station, or the western portion of the Downtown Station Area. The 70 acres

or nearly 13% of area in commercial use is focused in the town center, along Main Street. Nearly seven percent of the land use is some type of open space such as wetland, orchard, open land, or pasture. Roughly four percent of the area is in industrial use, and these sites are located along the river, to the southeast, or near the High/Main Street area. Approximately six percent of the land in the station area is considered developable. This developable land is interspersed throughout the station area and exists around all three identified

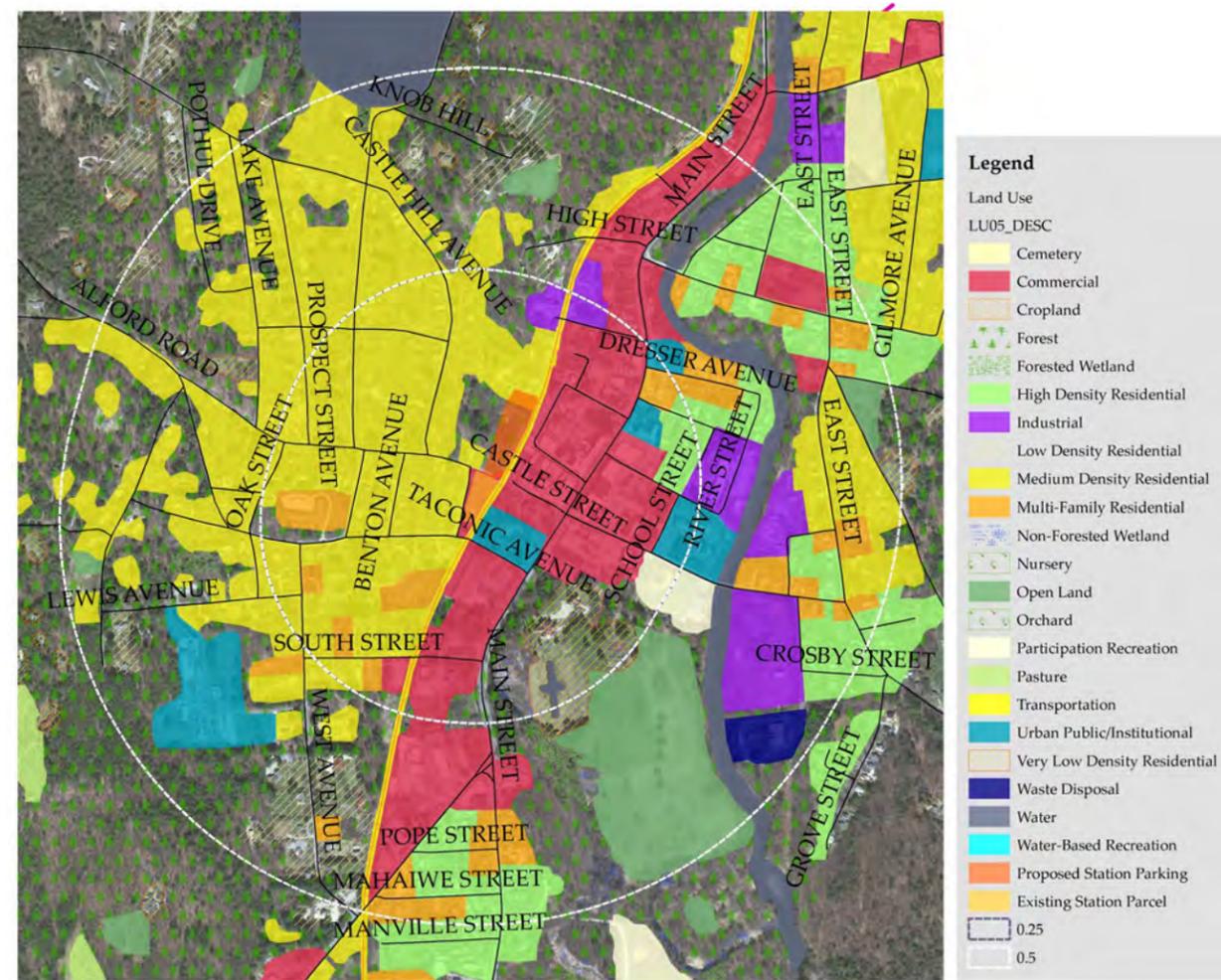
potential station location sites within the Downtown Station Area. The existence of vacant or underused land within the Downtown Station Area proximate to identified potential station sites provides opportunity for infill development and could also augment parking capacity.

There are five parks or open space areas within the station area. These include Town Hall Park, South Street Park, Memorial Field, Grove Street Park and East Mountain State Forest. Within the station area itself, the Housatonic River cuts through the Downtown Station Area, to the east. The Housatonic River Walk encourages residents and visitors to walk along the river. Lake Mansfield abuts the station area to the north along Knob Hill. Nearly twenty five percent of the land area within the station area is classified as forest.

There is floodplain along the Housatonic River as it passes through the eastern section of the station area. (See Figure 7.14). A small area of floodplain extends into the ¼ mile radius, though the bulk of it is in the ½ mile radius in the southeastern area. A developed section of flood plain is within the ½ mile radius. Uses within the floodplain include high density residential and industrial use. There is wetland resource area and buffer to the northwestern corner, lower western quadrant and southeastern quadrant. There is also riverfront protection area along the Housatonic River in the eastern quadrant of the station area. Habitat for rare, endangered or threatened species is present along the river corridor.

There are three historic districts within the station area: Searles Castle Historic District (District B), Downtown Historic District (District A) and District C. The historic train station falls within the Downtown Historic District. The Great Barring-

Figure 7.15: Land Use within the Downtown Great Barrington Station Area



Land Use	Area	Percent
Commercial	70.1	12.5%
Forest	137.3	24.6%
Forested Wetland	3.1	0.6%
High Density Residential	36.7	6.6%
Industrial	19.7	3.5%
Low Density Residential	19.8	3.5%
Medium Density Residential	149.7	26.8%
Multi-Family Residential	27	4.8%
Non-Forested Wetland	4.4	0.8%
Open Land	30.4	5.4%
Orchard	0.5	0.1%
Participation Recreation	4	0.7%
Pasture	0.1	0.02%
Urban/Institutional	19.1	3.4%
Transportation	5.4	0.9%
Waste Disposal	3.6	0.6%
Water	14.2	2.5%
Very Low Density Residential	13.5	2.4%

Source: MassGIS 2005 Land Use Layer

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ton Historic Districts and Commission Bylaw calls for special review of changes to the historic train station, with specific standards and criteria for the roof and eaves of the structure.

Zoning

The zoning within the ½ mile station area radius reflects the primarily residential character of Great Barrington’s downtown area and the central commercial corridor along Main Street/Route 7. The historic station itself is within the General Business District, whereas the proposed parking

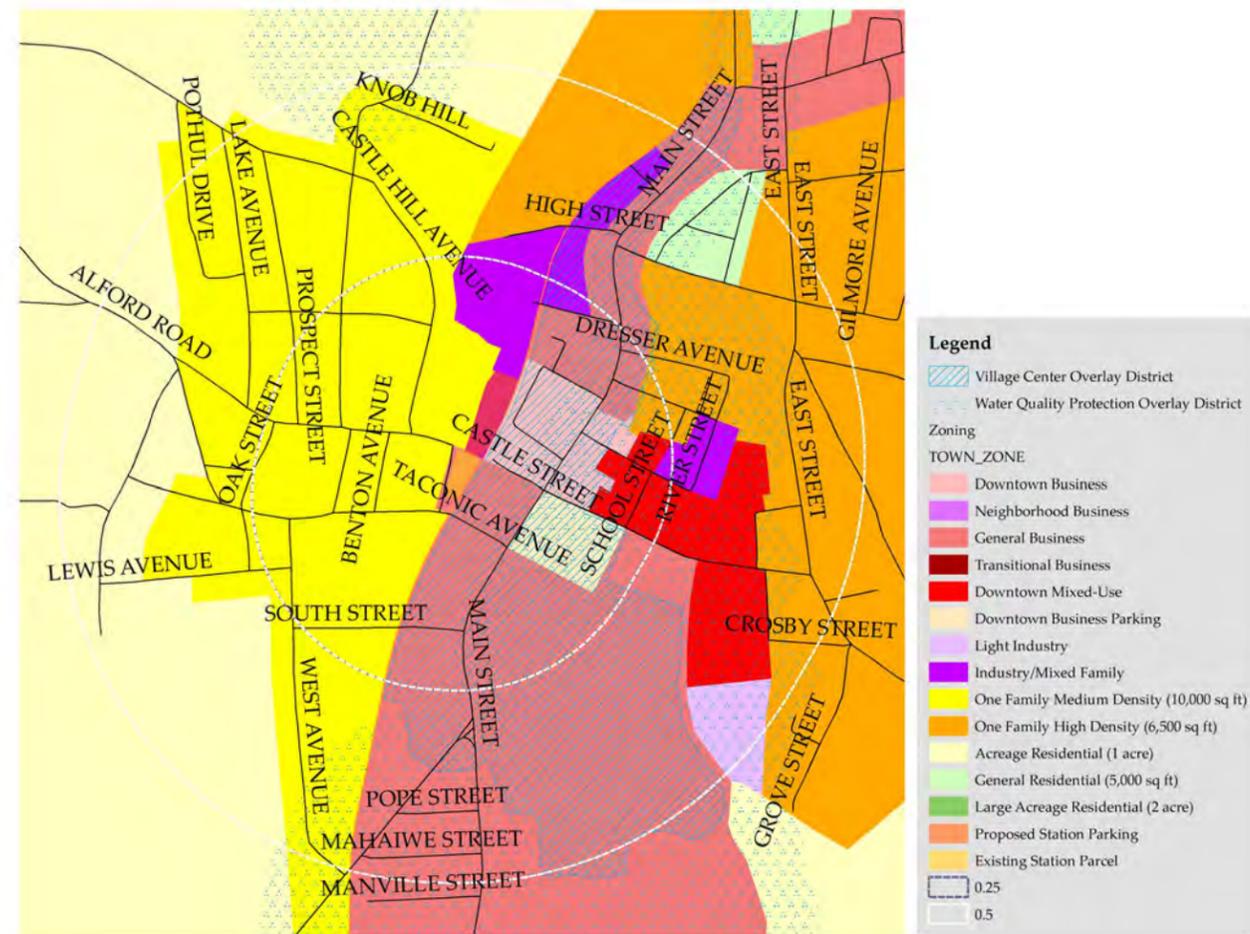
lots are within the Industry/Multi-Family district. The rest of the station area falls within the following zoning districts: One-Family Medium Density, Downtown Business, Downtown Business Parking, General Residential, Light Industry and One Family High Density. The districts within the ½ mile area do allow a passenger rail station by special permit granted by the Selectboard. The following overlay districts are within the ½ mile area: the Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) and the Water Quality Protection Overlay District.

The purpose of the VCOD is to foster a mix of uses, encourage greater pedestrian activity, encourage the preservation of historic buildings, encourage economic revitalization and promote mixed-use buildings. These goals sync with the goals of Transit Oriented Development. By-right uses allowed within the VCOD are retail stores and/or wholesale sales, mixed use and live/work units. Uses allowed by special permit include retail stores and/or wholesalers with a total gross floor area of 10,000 or more square feet, large scale

commercial development of 20,000 or more square feet, and public garages. There are also uses not allowed within the VCOD, including gas stations, drive through food or retail establishments, motor vehicle repair shop, or gravel, loam, sand and stone removal. The VCOD also contains dimensional requirements, parking requirements and design guidelines aimed at encouraging the overlay goals.

Thirty two percent of the station area is zoned as One-Family Medium Density Residential. This district permits many residential uses, though live/work units are not permitted and neither are mixed-uses. Uses such as a lodging house or tourist home for transient guests require a special permit. Permitted commercial uses are also limited. Twenty four percent of the area is zoned as General Business. In this district, there are fewer constraints on commercial uses, though there are more constraints on the type of residential development: while single or two family dwellings are permitted by right, a multi-family dwelling requires a special permit from the Selectboard and live/work units are not allowed. Mixed use is allowed by special permit granted by the Selectboard. The third largest area is zoned as Acreage Residential, and has similar constraints on what type of commercial use is permitted as in the One-Family Medium Density Residential District. Mixed use is not permitted, though lodging houses and tourist homes are permitted by special permit granted by the Selectboard. The Great Barrington Zoning Bylaw also has landscape requirements and performance standards that could be applied to the redevelopment of the historic passenger rail station and station area.

Figure 7.16: Zoning within the Downtown Great Barrington Station Area



District	Acres	Percent
Downtown Business	13.6	2.4%
Neighborhood Business	133.4	24.0%
Downtown Mixed-Use	25.2	4.5%
Downtown Business Parking	7.1	1.3%
Light Industry	5.8	1.0%
Industrial/Multi-Family	19.8	3.6%
One Family Medium Density (10,000 sq. ft)	178.2	32.1%
One-Family High Density (6,500 sq. ft)	78.1	14.1%
Acreage Residential (1 acre)	84.6	15.3%
General Residential (5,000 sq. ft)	8.9	1.6%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Data for Great Barrington

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Transportation

The Downtown Station Area is accessible via Route 7, the major transportation corridor running north-south through Great Barrington. Route 7 is also Great Barrington's Main Street, and it offers the most direct path through the downtown area. Maple Avenue/Route 23 provides east-west access to and from the Downtown Station Area, and would directly serve a station at the alternative South Street station site. Taconic Avenue, Bridge Street, East Street and Alford Road connect residential neighborhoods to the Main Street commercial corridor, and could help connect visitors to outlying southern Berkshire communities. Taconic Avenue and Maple Avenue provide access to Fairview Hospital, a federally designated critical care facility which serves patients from Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. Pedestrian infrastructure is strong within the Downtown Station Area, especially along Route 7 and the streets feeding in and out of residential neighborhoods. The sidewalks are generally wide and in good repair on both sides of the street. Crosswalks are painted. The intersection at Main, Bridge and Castle Streets is signalized as is the intersection of Taconic Avenue and Route 7.

The Peter Pan bus provides north-south and west-east inter-city passenger service from the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce visitor center at Main Street and Taconic Avenue. The Downtown Station Area is also served by the regional BRTA bus service.

Access, Circulation, Parking and Connectivity

The historic station site is accessible via Main Street/Route 7 and Taconic Avenue. It is connected to the downtown commercial district via a pedestrian tunnel, to Castle Street. Railroad Avenue, a rough dirt road, connects the proposed parking

area adjacent to the historic station to Rosseter Street.

Because Route 7 is the most direct route through town, it is also the busiest. A 2008 traffic analysis calculated an average daily traffic (ADT) count of 13,200. On busy days, especially at peak traffic times and in peak season, circulation through town can feel congested. However, Route 7 is the only street within the Downtown Station Area that exceeds an ADT of 10,000. A traffic study completed by the town in advance of the Main Street project in 2009 identified an ADT of 19,600 on Route 7. In terms of improving traffic flow and reducing delay, the 2014 Main Street improvement project will provide some benefit and the project also incorporates shared use bicycle facilities.

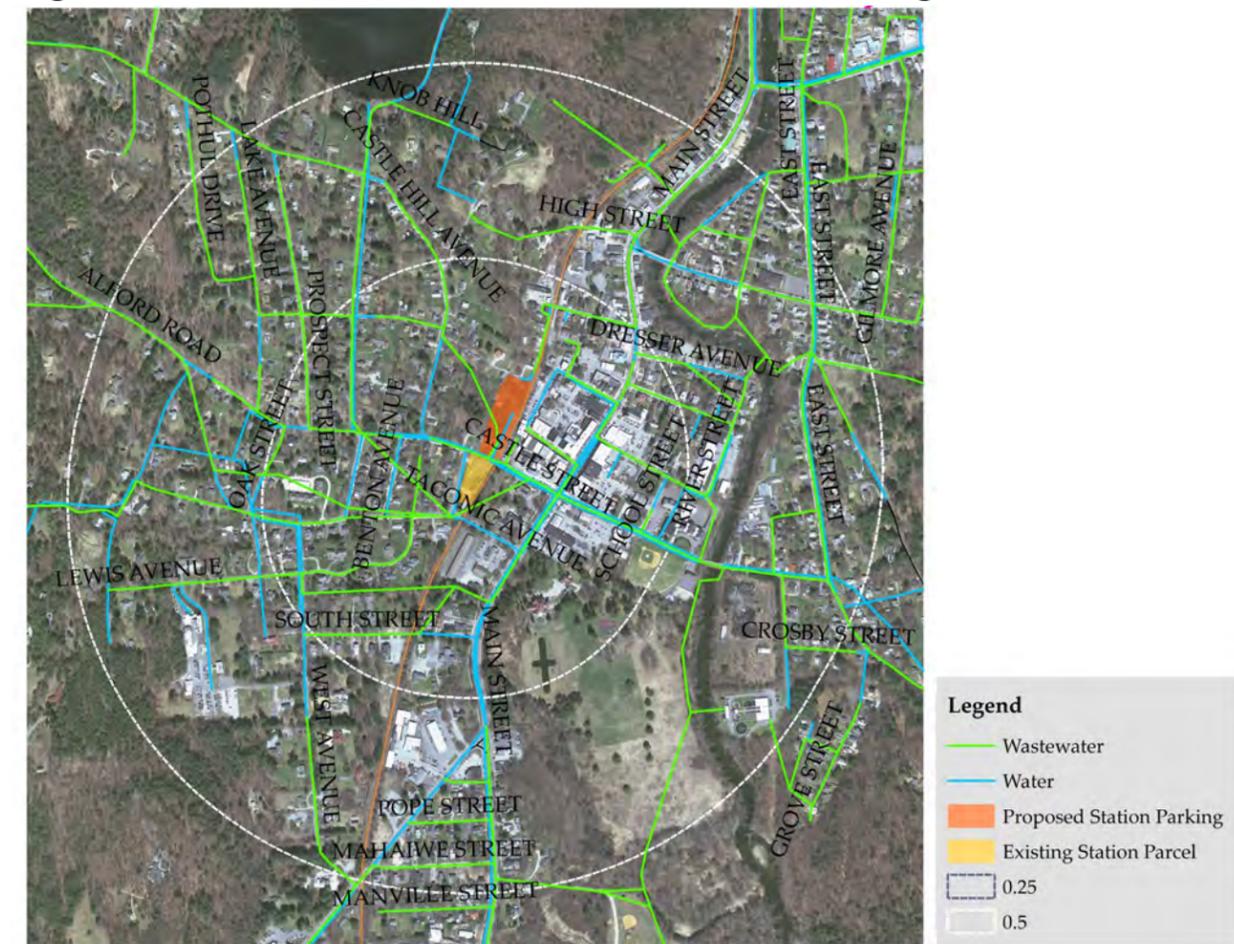
Great Barrington has some municipal parking available within and near the station area. Addressing parking needs is an identified challenge, and the town explicitly stated in its recent Master Plan that it does not wish to construct a parking structure. There are 947 parking spaces available in the Downtown Area. These are comprised of on-street parking spaces, public parking spaces within lots, as well as private parking lots. The majority of the nearly 1,000 parking spaces available in the Downtown area are privately owned. An ongoing construction project to improve infrastructure along Main Street will reduce the number of on-street spaces by 20. The majority of parking is behind the buildings along Main Street. In the Master Plan, it is indicated that new parking should follow this pattern. The Master Plan identifies some potential locations to add additional parking: the area behind Reid Cleaners, the space behind St. James Place, as well as a lot west of the railroad tracks. The parking lot around Town Hall

could also be redesigned to accommodate double loaded parking. According to the Master Plan, in order to support the business community, it is important to preserve "prime" parking for visitors. The Master Plan also notes that even on a busy weekend, the private lots are not filled. Currently, a Downtown Parking Task Force is working with business owners to lease or purchase remote parking spaces for themselves and for their employees, leaving prime on-street spaces for shoppers. Efforts have also been made to offer more signage and maps to help visitors navigate parking in the

Downtown area. Studies and task forces have demonstrated that the supply of parking is not the key issue—the key issue is helping visitors identify the available public and private spaces. The Town will continue to work with business owners and the Task Force to identify management and design strategies to enhance existing parking while creating new parking capacity in a style sensitive to the Town's desires and character.

The historic station is well connected to downtown Great Barrington through existing roads and

Figure 7.17: Public Infrastructure in the Downtown Great Barrington Station Area



Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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streets, and it is also well connected via a pedestrian underpass. The ongoing Main Street Reconstruction Project is a multi-year project focused on the section of Main Street between St. James Place on Taconic Avenue to Cottage Street, a distance of a ½ mile. The project includes replacement of existing roadway and pavement, and will incorporate infrastructure improvements such as curbs, drainage, traffic signals, lighting and crosswalks. The completion of this project will provide enhanced pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Public Infrastructure

The Downtown Station Area is served by public water and sewer. (See Figure 7.17). A recent capital improvement project has focused on upgrading the wastewater treatment plant to meet current regulatory requirements. In terms of capacity for increased use, residential or commercial, the Downtown Station Area has excess capacity and could handle increased use.

Opportunities for Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Existing Station Footprint with Parking Opportunity

The existing rail station in Great Barrington is privately owned and available for reuse. Two parcels adjacent to the station, to the west and north, offers parking opportunity. The infrastructure for both water and sewer at the existing station is good, with capacity for increased use. The station itself would require some renovation to accommodate contemporary train cars. One such improvement would be an elevated platform. Using this existing site and station would offer a unique opportunity to reuse a historic property with its original, intended use and bring travelers immediately into the center of Great Barrington. It would support

infill development and adaptive reuse.

Downtown Area with Dense Population, Retail Activity, Culture, History and Existing Transit

It is possible that train passengers alighting in Downtown Great Barrington will end up eating, shopping or just meandering in Great Barrington's downtown area regardless of their trip purpose, because it offers such a concentration of opportunity in terms of dining and shopping. The dense downtown area could also appeal to day trippers wanting to see the area for the day before heading home on the train. The Downtown Station Area contains community anchors, popular tourist destination in the Mahaiwe Theater, accommodations to the north of downtown on Stockbridge Road, dining establishments, and regional employers. There is developable land and sites that could be considered transformational and help leverage development associated with the historic station site.

The Downtown Area is Served by Existing Transit

The Downtown Station Area is served by existing bus transit. The downtown character, pedestrian infrastructure and existing uses in Great Barrington support public transportation and a reduced number of vehicle miles travelled.

Strong Physical Connectivity to Nearby Neighborhoods and Automobile Connectivity to Outlying Areas

The Downtown Station Area in Great Barrington offers strong pedestrian connectivity to the flanking residential neighborhoods such as Castle Hill and the area across the river along Bridge Street. Main Street, Alford Road, State Road and Route 23 offer strong automobile connectivity to other southern Berkshire communities such as Sheffield, Alford, Egremont, Monterey and Mount Washington.

Ongoing Community and Site Development Efforts Supportive of Transit Oriented Development

Recent efforts to reuse buildings and sites within the Downtown Station Area include the remediation and mixed-use commercial and residential development of the former New England Log Homes site, a plan for mixed income condominiums in the former Searles School, and a proposed mixed commercial reuse of the former fire house on Castle Street. These projects support Transit Oriented Development and could also help address the challenge of the increasing demand for housing and housing cost burden in Great Barrington. They also are examples of infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Great Barrington is Active in Efforts that Could Benefit Passenger Rail Service and Station Impacts

Great Barrington has been supportive of the return of passenger rail, and has been active in the Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Analysis. The recent master planning process helped the town identify goals and strategies to address some of its challenges, such as an increased housing costs and aging infrastructure. One such example of this is the consideration of a Business Improvement District. Such an organization can be helpful in maintaining the station area as an attractive and safe place for visitors to navigate. The ongoing work with the parking task force and businesses is another example of how the community can leverage its vibrant business community to help address some of the challenges of passenger rail and to support passenger rail in Great Barrington. The community is also reviewing whether special zoning districts, such as Chapter 40R that increases allowable density in order to accommodate housing development near transit, would be desirable.

Great Barrington is Supportive of Passenger Rail Service and Passenger Rail Station

Since the beginning of the Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Analysis, Great Barrington's leadership has been supportive of reintroducing passenger rail service to the Berkshire region, and of a passenger rail station specifically in Great Barrington. Members of the planning board and select board have attended public and stakeholder meetings. The return of passenger rail service is explicitly supported in their recently adopted Master Plan.

A Downtown Area Station in Great Barrington Supports Regional Development Goals

Supporting transportation system enhancements in an existing activity center is supported by the goals and policies of the Sustainable Berkshires regional plan, as is considering the adaptive reuse of a historic building such as the historic passenger station in the downtown area. Improvements that would benefit passengers, such as enhanced pedestrian infrastructure and improved cycling infrastructure would also support the goals of the Sustainable Berkshires plan. Increasing housing opportunity in an existing activity center while supporting tourism and business is also supported within the Sustainable Berkshires plan.

Great Barrington has Existing Zoning, Land Use and Transit to Support TOD

Great Barrington's existing zoning bylaw and its Village Center Overlay District support uses and development that are considered cornerstones of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Existing land uses also correspond with the goals of TOD. The station area is also served by existing transit service (BRTA regional public bus service) which is key to the future success of TOD and expanding transit options.

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Challenges to Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

The Attractiveness, Popularity and Historic Development Pattern of the Downtown Area Poses Spatial Constraints

The existing development pattern in the Downtown Area poses challenges to the development or construction of a large passenger rail station similar to that of the Intermodal Center in Pittsfield, especially if parking is considered a limiting factor. The Town, MassDOT and the railroad company will need to work with property owners and business owners to identify considerations for the design, renovation and/or construction of a station in the Downtown area to make sure that its inclusion is done sensitively and supports existing and future land uses. A large regional station is difficult to site in the downtown area while retaining the existing form, whereas a smaller local station would better fit and could be integrated into the existing downtown fabric.

The Downtown Station Area Will Still Require “Last Mile” Planning

Although the Downtown Station Area is served by existing transit, links to destinations beyond downtown Great Barrington will need to be developed. These could include shuttle service, zip cars or car rentals, cab service, or expanded BRTA service to sync with passenger rail service schedules and passenger destination demand.

Noise from the Passenger Rail Service and Increased Traffic Could Impact Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods

The downtown area is flanked by residential neighborhoods to the west, east, and north. Increased train traffic and related automobile traffic through the downtown area could increase noise in these residential neighborhoods. BRPC has

identified five at-grade crossings within the Downtown area, and adopting a quiet zone at these crossings could help reduce some of the train noise. Built or planted buffers could also help to mitigate train and traffic noise.

Passenger Rail Service Could Increase Demand for Housing

A 2013 Housing Need Assessment conducted for Great Barrington by BRPC indicated that while housing value has increased in Great Barrington; there has been an overall decrease in available rental units. Though housing stock grew, it did not necessarily grow in the downtown area. There has been dramatic growth in the number of seasonal homes since 1980. Meanwhile, the community is a very attractive place to live, and all varieties of housing units are sought after. This has driven up the cost of housing. Rent has doubled in the last twenty years and the cost of buying a house has tripled, even while household income has decreased. There is a prohibitive gap between what the median income household can afford and the median sales price of a single family home. If the return of passenger rail to Great Barrington results in an increased demand for housing the potential exists for prices to increase and caution should be exercised to ensure that existing residents are not priced out of either buying or renting a unit in the downtown area.

Limited Circulation Alternatives

The main road through the downtown area in Great Barrington is Main Street/Route 7. This street handles passenger vehicles as well as truck vehicles. This is the most direct route through the downtown area. There are few alternatives with the same road capacity to handle high traffic volume.

Recommendations

1. The improvement plans for the redevelopment of the Great Barrington rail station are encouraged to include adequate parking to meet ridership demand. The design is encouraged to reduce conflicts between pedestrians, bicycle riders, transit vehicles and automobiles.
2. The Town is encouraged to conduct a market analysis to determine what types of residential or commercial development would be best suited within the station area in a passenger rail station scenario. It then should consider implementing those recommendations through amendments to the local land use regulations.
3. The Town of Great Barrington, MassDOT, the owner of the historic station and the railroad company are encouraged to work with an architect or engineer familiar with train station design to identify the renovations required at the historic station to once again welcome passenger rail service into the town center. This work should identify cost and a time frame feasible for completion.
4. The Town of Great Barrington is encouraged to continue working with local businesses and property owners to develop a parking management strategy for the Downtown Station Area
5. The Town of Great Barrington should consider adopting a “quiet zone” for the at-grade crossings within the downtown area. This will help mitigate the noise impacts of returned passenger rail service through Great Barrington.
6. The Town of Great Barrington, MassDOT and the railroad company are encouraged to work with the station owner and nearby property owners to create built or planted buffers to mitigate any noise or visual impacts of both increased train traffic and automobile traffic around the passenger rail station.
7. The Town of Great Barrington is encouraged to plan for a diverse array of housing in the downtown area to accommodate residents of all incomes and ages.
8. The Town of Great Barrington is encouraged to plan for the redevelopment of vacant or underused sites within the downtown area and especially within the station area.
9. The Town of Great Barrington and local businesses are encouraged to work together through efforts such as a Business Improvement District to keep the station area, pedestrian connections, the river walk, and parks and open spaces maintained and attractive for all visitors. Efforts could possibly include streetscape and pedestrian safety maintenance to maintain vibrant pedestrian activity; continuing the maintenance of the Riverwalk and connections to the Housatonic River as a recreation activity for visitors; and increasing the profile of parks and open space areas to keep them in active use and attractive spaces for visitors and residents.
10. In advance of renovating and redeveloping the historic rail station site, the project proponent is encouraged to commission a traffic study to determine the traffic impacts, develop recommendations for site access/egress and if necessary plan for and implement mitigation measures for the Main Street/Route 7

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corridor and the surrounding area.

11. Passengers alighting at the station should be provided with clear signage and navigational tools to help them explore Great Barrington and the greater Berkshire region. Directional kiosks and wayfinding signs should be provided which identify clear and safe connections to points of interest along with pedestrian scale lighting.

State Line Station

Station Area Context

The proposed State Line passenger rail station, located in a rural agricultural area on Route 7, straddles the Massachusetts / Connecticut state line. The State Line area is primarily a low density residential and agricultural neighborhood with an abundance of forest and agricultural resources and a few manufacturing / processing facilities. The Housatonic River runs east-west along the northern half of the station area. The proposed passenger rail station site is almost entirely forest land although the south-central portion of the proposed site contains a wetland resource area and buffer. The undeveloped ten acre parcel, owned by Housatonic Railroad Company (HRRC), would enable the State Line station to serve as a regional station, attracting riders from northern Connecticut, eastern New York, and the southern Berkshires. There is no public transportation in the station area, nor is there pedestrian infrastructure.

The station area was identified by creating a ¼ and ½ mile buffer from the proposed station parcel. It is defined by the following boundaries: from the south, it begins at Clayton Road in North Canaan and includes the junction where Routes 7 and 7A meet, and continues north to Clayton Road. From east to west, the station area spans from Clayton Roads in Sheffield and North Canaan on the

east over to Route 7A and the northern terminus of Valley View Road. Figure 7.18 shows the ¼ and ½ mile radius of the proposed station and includes a locus map demonstrating the proposed station's relationship to the town of Sheffield. The station area is roughly 10 miles from Downtown Great Barrington, 21 miles from Downtown Lee, and 31 miles from the Pittsfield Intermodal Center.

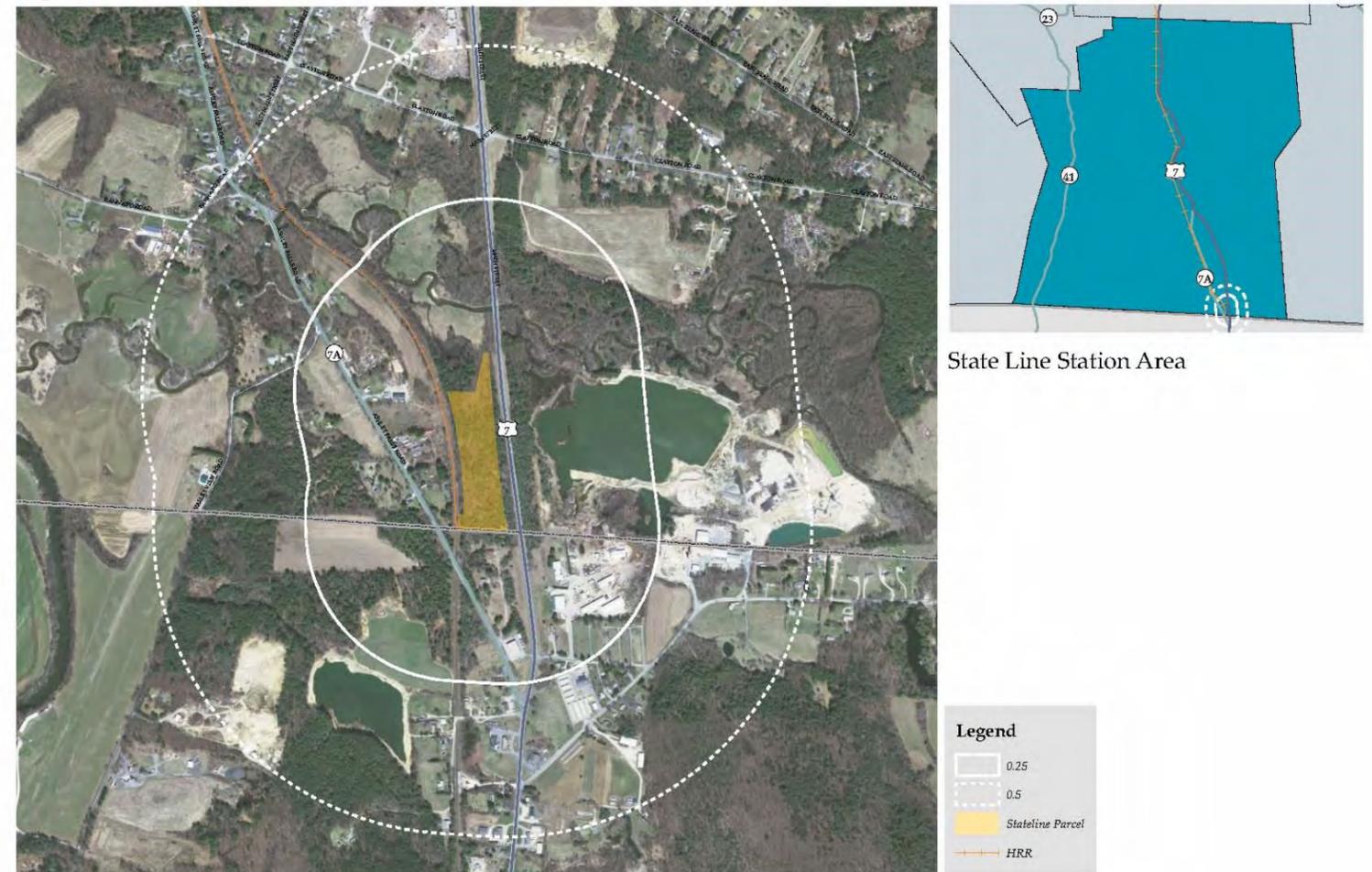
Station Area Vision

According to the town's 2005 Master Plan and

2013 Community Development Plan, the overarching vision for the town, with the exception of the Village Center and Ashley Falls, is to maintain and preserve the town's rural character and agricultural heritage. The vision for the town, according to the 2005 Master Plan, includes the following components:

- "The rural beauty and character are maintained and enhanced and the town's agricultural heritage is promoted and kept vital."
- "Unique and special natural resources, including lakes, streams, ponds, wetlands,

Figure 7.18: State Line Station Area



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wildlife habitats and corridors, open spaces, hillsides, ridgelines and scenic vistas are protected through wise stewardship, which encourages the creation of compatible recreational and economic opportunities such as ecotourism.”

- “Historic and cultural buildings and landscapes are preserved and enhanced in a setting where housing and business development are attractively sited following a traditional New England pattern of villages and farmhouse clusters.”
- “Existing compatible businesses, economic opportunities and entrepreneurial development are available, supported and encouraged.”

While community planning documents do not specifically call out passenger rail, there is interest in encouraging new transportation and tourism opportunities. The Master Plan mentions “investigat[ing] Berkshire Scenic Railroad expansion routes to town”, “promot[ing] alternatives to single-person automobile travel”, and recommends encouraging motorists on Routes 7 and 7A to patronize businesses and cultural offerings.

The following are goals and strategies included in the town’s Master Plan and Community Development Strategy that are relevant to the proposed passenger rail station and constitute the basis of a vision for the station area.

- Sheffield is interested in promoting economic vitality, the availability of a full range of housing options, better pedestrian circulation and **enhanced opportunity for public transit**, as well as in making thoughtful land use choices and preserving the rural character of the community. (FY2014 Community Development Strategy)
- Sheffield seeks to protect, promote and in-

crease its existing open space, agricultural, cultural and recreation resources (collectively hereinafter referred to as “rural resources”) as a means of maintaining and improving the Town’s rural and scenic character. Sheffield seeks to foster **smart growth objectives that efficiently integrate the Town’s rural resources strategy with economic development, housing and transportation strategies.** (FY2014 Community Development Strategy)

- Sheffield’s transportation goal is to provide a wide range of vehicular and non-vehicular transportation options for residents. Using public and private investment, this goal will be met through continued maintenance and upgrade of current roads, expansion of ADA compliant sidewalks and trail systems where feasible, and **provision of additional public and non-vehicular transportation opportunities.** (FY2014 Community Development Strategy)
- It is recommended that growth in the tourism industry be directed so as to maintain the historic and rural character of Sheffield. Also recommended is further development of ecotourism and agri-tourism businesses such as hiking, biking, canoeing, bird-watching, farm and history and garden tours. (Master Plan)

Extrapolating from the town’s planning documents, the vision for the State Line Station is as follows: State Line Station, nestled within the farmland of southern Sheffield, provides ample opportunities for transit users to appreciate the cultural, recreational, and historical assets which envelop the town, while still maintaining the town’s rural and scenic character and protecting sensitive natural resources.

Station Area Existing Conditions

Demographics

An estimated 306 people live within the State Line station area, representing less than ten percent of Sheffield’s total population. In terms of household composition, Sheffield mirrors that of Berkshire County: roughly one third of householders live alone, one third of households have seniors, one quarter of households have children, and the number of family households versus non-family households is split 60:40. As compared to Sheffield, a greater percentage of North Canaan households have individuals under 18 and a lesser percentage have individuals aged 65+. Sheffield has a higher proportion of older residents, with almost thirty percent of residents aged 65+. The median household income in Sheffield is higher than the median household income in North Canaan (\$55,278 versus \$45,992), with median family income being much higher than median non-family income. There is a diversity of income levels in Sheffield, with the largest percentage brackets (17-18%) belonging to the \$25,000-34,999 and the \$100,000-149,999 income groups.

Housing Characteristics

A majority of housing units are owner-occupied (77% in Sheffield versus 65% in North Canaan) and most housing is in the form of single-family homes (90% in Sheffield and 81% in North Canaan). North Canaan has more multi-family housing than Sheffield, and in both towns multi-family housing is predominantly 2-4 or 20+ units. The housing stock is aging and more than thirty percent was built prior to 1939. Fourteen percent of housing units in Sheffield and four percent of units in North Canaan are seasonal and there is a low rental vacancy rate in Sheffield in particular. Berkshire County, Sheffield included, has not ex-

perienced significant growth in recent years. North Canaan has seen even less growth.

According to Trulia, ten residential homes have been sold in the station area since September 2013, with an average of about one sale per month. Historically, most homes have sold for \$100,000-\$250,000, although some homes in Ashley Falls were able to command a higher price. Residential homes west of the station parcel sold for a higher price and homes south of the station parcel in North Canaan sold for less. The current real estate market, according to Trulia, is comprised entirely of single-family residential properties with no new construction or rental properties. There are seven homes (ranging from \$130,000-\$415,000) on the market in the station area as of the writing of this report. The average home has been on the market for 87 days with an asking price of \$127 per square foot.

The median home value in Sheffield is \$318,600, whereas the median value for the county is \$205,600. In Sheffield, forty percent of homes are valued at \$300,000-499,999. Sixty percent of homes in North Canaan are valued at \$200,000-299,999 and less than three percent of homes are valued at more than \$500,000. Housing costs present a significant burden to homeowners and renters in both North Canaan and Sheffield. Of Sheffield homeowners with a mortgage, 58% pay more than thirty percent of their household income for housing costs. North Canaan homeowners with a mortgage are also cost-burdened and 45% pay more than thirty percent of income on housing costs. While Sheffield/North Canaan homeowners without mortgages are less likely to be burdened by housing costs, 22% of Sheffield owners and 34% of North Canaan homeowners pay more than 30% of their household income to-

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wards housing. The median rent in Sheffield is \$823 and most renters pay between \$750 and \$999 in rent each month. Housing in Sheffield is particularly expensive for renters, and more than half of renters pay 35% or more of their household income on rent. The median rent in North Canaan is \$1,095 and 63% of renters pay more than \$1,000 each month. Nearly eighty percent of renters in North Canaan experience a housing cost burden.

Land Use

The State Line Station Area contains approximately 459 acres. On the Massachusetts side, just over fifty percent of land in the station area is residential and almost a quarter is industrial. There are sixty-one acres of agricultural/horticultural land. Less than five percent of land is considered exempt, commercial, or has multiple uses (primarily residential or commercial). Wetlands represent 45.3% of the station area land and pasture and cropland comprise an additional 19.2% of land. There is a range of other uses, including lower density residential, mining, industrial, and open land, among other things.

There is a total of 120 acres of developable land in the station area. The land includes 5 rural-zoned parcels, the smallest being 1 acre and the largest at 26 acres. Nearly half of the developable land is within the ¼ mile station area radius. Developable land is largely adjacent to or including farmland or forest land. Northeast of the station parcel there is a large tract of developable land. Any development will need to be sensitive to the surrounding land uses and any potential effects of development.

The State Line Station Area is largely a low density residential neighborhood. Historic/cultural sites, particularly in the area's oldest neighbor-

hood, serves as a major anchor. A portion of the Ashley Falls Historic District / Ashley Falls neighborhood is located in the northern part of the station area, while the majority is just outside the station area.

Floodplains cover 20% of the total land area in Sheffield, and much of the land surrounding the site is within a FEMA 100 year floodplain. (See Figure 7.20). In general, the floodplain areas are along the banks of the Housatonic River. As noted on the map, the floodplains are situated 1) north of the station parcel, bounded on the west by railroad tracks and on east by Main Street, 2) east of Main Street in a strip heading southeast, and 3) west of Ashley Falls Road. Wetland Resource Areas and Buffers are similarly located, and include

much of the land east of Main Street and west of Ashley Falls Road, north of the station parcel, and the southern portion of the station parcel. Wetlands cover approximately 1.4% of Sheffield. More than a third of the station parcel is situated in a wetland resource area and buffer.

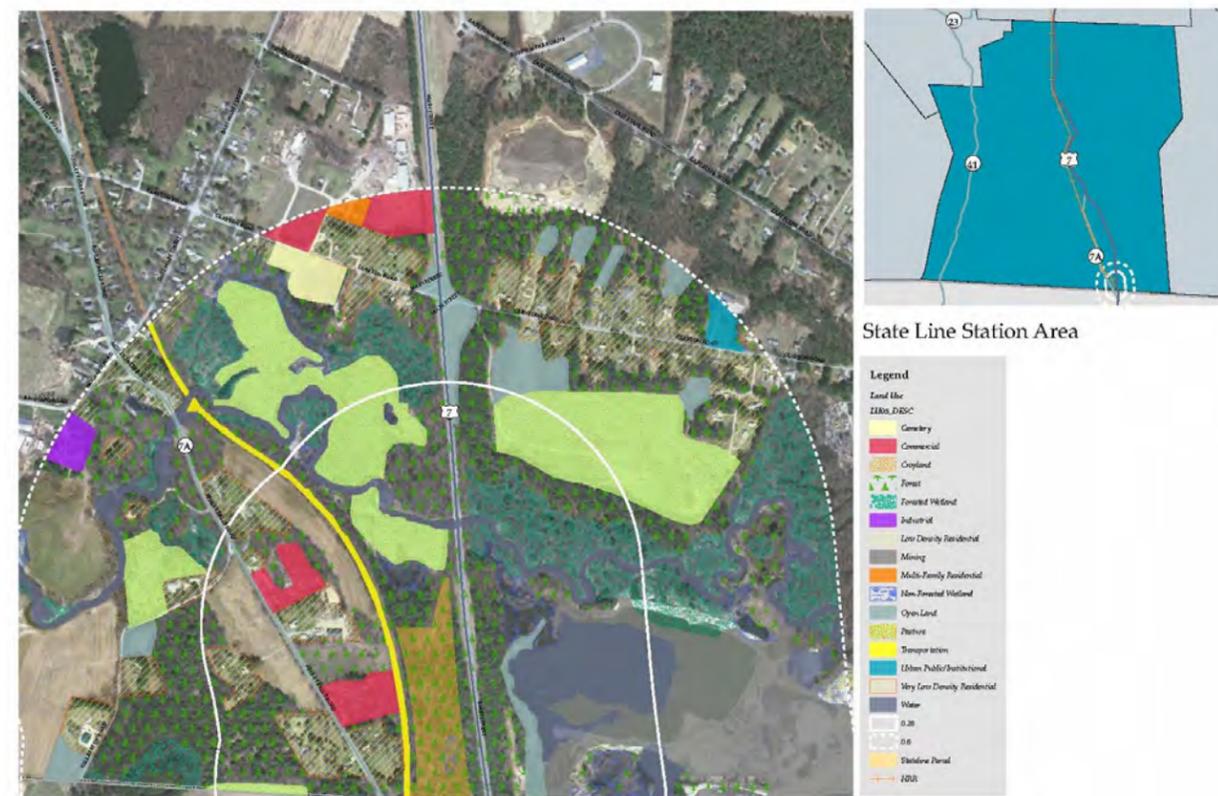
Open space in the station area is largely due to land under private ownership with a Chapter 61 conservation restriction. Open space is to the north and the west of the station parcel.

Zoning

The zoning within the station area reflects the rural nature of the area. Nearly all of the land is zoned rural, with a very small portion zoned for the Village Center in Ashley Falls. (See Figure

7.21). The proposed station site falls into the Rural District zoning. According to the town's zoning bylaws, the Rural District is "intended to be used primarily for personal residence, agriculture, forestry, conservation, recreation and open space maintenance along with smaller, low intensity, non-disruptive business establishments that do not detract from the rural, residential nature of the district." In the Rural District, 'conservation or open space area, recreation, common or park lands' is permitted by right. Several types of establishments (e.g. markets, restaurants, individual retail stores, and service establishments) are allowed by right, providing they meet specific criteria outlined in Sheffield's zoning bylaws. Hotels/motels and fast food/drive through restaurants are

Figure 7.19: Land Use within the Massachusetts State Line Station Area



	Acres	Percent
Forest	143.9	31.3%
Forested Wetland	50.4	11%
Pasture	50.2	10.9%
Mining	39.6	8.6%
Cropland	38	8.3%
Very Low Density Residential	33.1	7.2%
Water	32.4	7%
Low Density Residential	21.7	4.7%
Open Land	16	3.5%
Non-Forested Wetland	13.9	3%
Commercial	10.3	2.2%
Transportation	3.5	0.8%
Cemetery	3	0.7%
Industrial	1.9	0.4%
Urban Public/Institution	1.5	0.3%
Total	459	100%

Source: MassGIS 2005 Land Use Layer

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Figure 7.20: Environmental Constraints in Massachusetts State Line Station Area

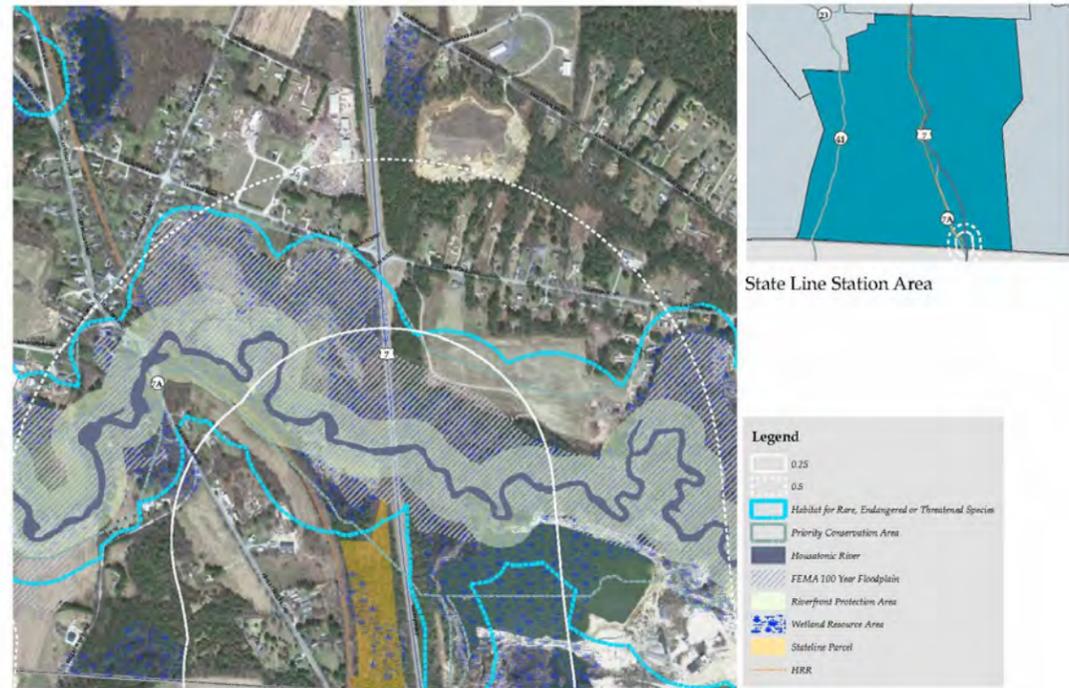
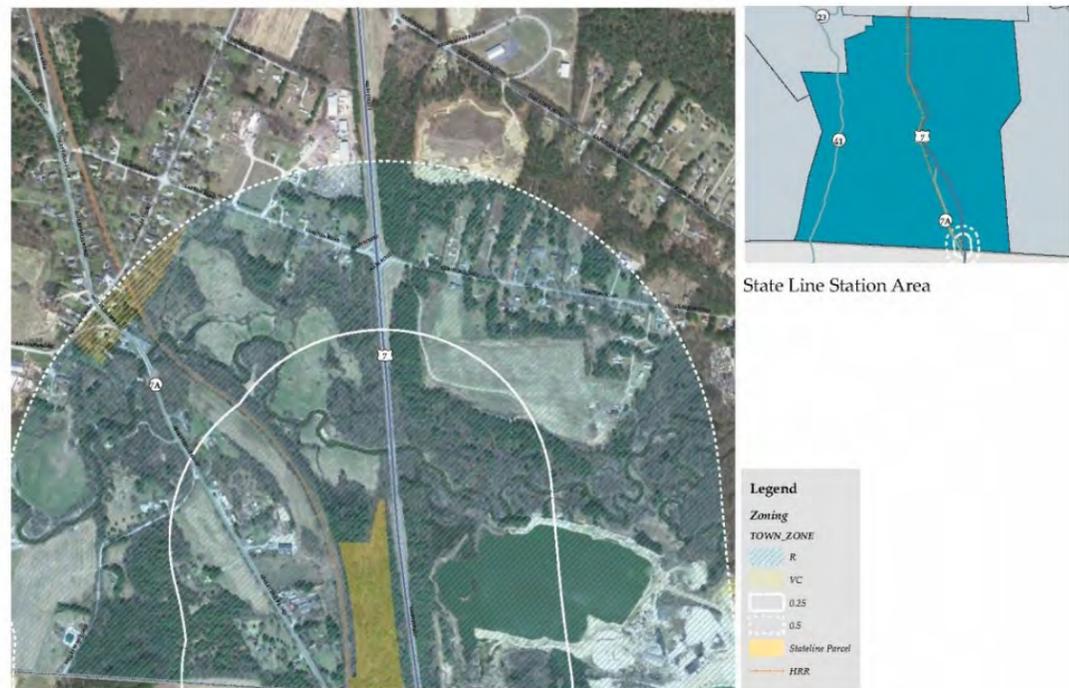


Figure 7.21: Zoning in Massachusetts State Line Station Area



expressly prohibited.

The Village Center District, which comprises only 2% of the station area, is as outlined in the town’s zoning bylaws, “intended to be used for traditional village center residential and commercial activities. This district recognizes the historically compact area of pedestrian-oriented residential and business uses. The range of permitted uses is wide, but designed to foster those uses which are not land intensive, are compatible with residential uses and may be accommodated within existing structures.” In this district, many types of establishments are permitted by right, including: markets, restaurants, individual retail stores, service establishments, and ‘conservation or open space area, recreation, common or park lands.’ As in the Rural District, hotels/motels and fast food/drive through restaurants are expressly prohibited.

Transportation

The State Line Station Area has two main transportation corridors, which both run north-south. US Route 7, in addition to providing access to the station site, also serves as one of the region’s major north-south corridors. Route 7 runs through the whole of Berkshire County and continues southbound through North Canaan, eventually meeting with I-95 on the Connecticut coast. Route 7A serves as a short minor corridor and runs just over 3 miles from Ashley Falls to North Canaan.

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority does not currently operate bus services in Sheffield.

Car rental or car sharing services should be provided on-site, or else it may be difficult for north-bound patrons to reach their ultimate destinations. If the station site is located on a bicycle route, offering bike rentals might be feasible. Additionally, “local” and “private” shuttles can be offered for disembarking passengers traveling to local tourist spots and accommodations.

Access, Circulation, Parking and Connectivity

Routes 7 and 7A straddle the rail corridor. Route 7 is the major north-south transportation corridor in the area. The road network is somewhat sparse otherwise and mostly leads to and through nearby residential neighborhoods. Route 7 at the Connecticut State Line handles approximately 4,400 vehicles daily. Smaller secondary roads see significantly less traffic. Silver Street, for example, handles about 420 vehicles each day. It is not expected that traffic will pose major concerns in the station area. Station area roads are not being utilized at full capacity and the physical infrastructure could handle some degree of increased traffic. In order to alleviate congestion on Route 7, a dedicated left-hand turn lane could be added for northbound traffic.

While Routes 7A and Route 7 have marked shoulders, there are no specific features to encourage pedestrian or bicycle travel. Improvements or signage could make the station area a safer place for pedestrian or bicycle travel. A bicycle route along the road from downtown Sheffield, through Ashley Falls, and south to the station might be viable. This could connect with the already existing self-guided “If This House Could Talk” bicycle tour of historic locations in Ashley Falls and Sheffield.

There is currently no on-street parking and no expectation of parking in this area. A surface parking lot on the station parcel will be able to provide ample room for ground level short-term and long-term parking for rail users.

Zoning in the Massachusetts State Line Station Area		
District	Acres	Percent
Rural	453.5	98.6%
Village Center	6.5	1.4%
Total	460	100%
Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission GIS Data for Sheffield		



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Public Infrastructure

The station area is not served by public sewer or water. All residential/commercial buildings are served by private septic systems. A private company provides water to Sheffield Center residents and businesses, but the service area does not extend to the station area.

Opportunities for Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Site Control of Proposed Station

Housatonic Railroad currently owns the proposed station parcel and is willing and interested in using it as a passenger rail station. Access to a developable site will further the viability of the development process.

Increased Flexibility in Siting and Design

The station's rural location and large parcel size means a lack of spatial constraints. The area is not built out, and could provide significant parking capacity while still maintaining the area's rural character.

Access to Major Roads

Transit users can gain access to the site via Route 7.

Challenges to Achieving the Vision for the Station Area

Lack of Town Interest in Development

The town has not expressed interest in passenger rail, nor in any major kind of development. The proposed station is not in a location preferred by the town (e.g. Village Center or North Sheffield). Additionally, this area has not been identified as

suitable for new development, as have the Village Center and Ashley Falls.

Incompatibility with Surrounding Land Use

The station location may not be entirely compatible with surrounding land uses (i.e. low density residential, and farmland). Because the rail corridor passes through residential neighborhoods, albeit low density ones, associated noise, sound, and vibration impacts may affect some residents. While a basic park-and-ride is the most suitable type of passenger rail stop, any additional development will need to be designed and sited carefully. The station and associated development will need to consider the environmental constraints of the parcel and how best to mitigate such concerns.

Lack of Existing Infrastructure

The town has no public sewer system. A private water company serves the center of town, but not the southern edge where the station area is located. Any new developments would need to manage infrastructure improvements and hook-ups.

Lack of Pedestrian Infrastructure and General Connectivity

As it stands, it would be difficult to get to the station area by any other means than motor vehicle. There are few roads in the station area, and the existing roads are not particularly pedestrian-friendly. The station is far from any existing public transportation routes.

Recommendations

As stated in previous sections of the report, the recommendation for the State Line site is conditional on a station not being located in North Canaan, Connecticut. However, for all the same reasons that we support downtown stations in the Berkshires we also support and would prefer that

a passenger rail station be located in North Canaan possibly at the historic North Canaan station site if feasible. If no feasible locations can be found in North Canaan then consideration should be given to the State Line station site. If constructed, the State Line Station will largely serve as a park-and-ride station, rather than a destination itself. The town desires little in the way of development and would prefer to manage its rural, open space, and natural beauty. Appropriate development will be limited in scale and scope.

1. The Town is encouraged to work with HRRC, owners of popular tourist destinations and accommodations, and other interested parties to determine how best to connect local transportation systems to get patrons conveniently and comfortably to their desired destinations with minimal impact on the community.
2. The Town is encouraged to work with stakeholders and partners to identify land and building uses they feel will support passenger rail service and vice versa, and work to adjust zoning language to suit the collective desire.
3. The Town is encouraged to work with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, MassDOT, and the Berkshire MPO to determine whether improvements to Route 7, such as a turning lane, would be needed.
4. The Town is encouraged to consider creating and / or maintaining bicycle networks between downtown Sheffield, Ashley Falls, and North Canaan neighborhoods.
5. The Town may consider whether applying for a Quiet Zone for its public rail crossings would be in the public's best interest.

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8. RIDERSHIP FORECASTING & PRELIMINARY SERVICE PLAN

Refinement of Ridership Estimates for the Proposed Passenger Rail Service

In 2010, HRRC contracted with Market Street Research (MSR) to complete a marketing study to determine the feasibility and financial viability of reestablishing passenger rail service along the Berkshire Line. One component of the MSR study was to develop ridership estimates for the proposed passenger rail service. The MSR report concluded that, properly structured, the proposed service would generate an estimated median ridership of 2 million one-way fares. The purpose of this section is to refine the MSR ridership estimates in order to develop ridership estimates for each of the recommended passenger rail stations identified in Section 4 of this study. This section also provides an overview of the key findings of the MSR study relating to ridership characteristics that help to inform decisions about passenger rail station locations and station amenities.

Introduction to the MSR Marketing Study

MSR is a marketing research company with over thirty-five years of experience in conducting custom marketing research and political polling for clients throughout the United States. MSR conducted an online survey of 2,567 residents in New York City, Litchfield County, Connecticut and Berkshire County, Massachusetts. It is worth noting that the study did not include resi-

dents of Westchester County, New York or Fairfield County, Connecticut who might also use the proposed passenger rail service to visit Berkshire County. In addition, the online survey only included respondents who had traveled north to Berkshire County or Litchfield County at least once in the past year and respondents who had traveled south to New York City at least once in the past year. Limiting the respondents in this manner adds a measure of conservatism to the estimates as one might presume that a number of people who have not traveled to these places within the last year will visit these places in the future.

Respondent Information in the MSR Study

The majority of respondents (2,316) to the online survey resided in New York City and are considered northbound riders. The remaining respondents (251) to the online survey resided in Berkshire County, Massachusetts or Litchfield County, Connecticut and are considered southbound riders. (See Table 8.1 below)

Table 8.1: Respondent Information

	Sample Size	% of Sample	Total Eligible Population	% of Eligible Population	Total Weight
Northbound Residents Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island	2,316	90.2%	1,982,159	92.1%	1.020264
Southbound Residents Berkshire County, Mass. and Litchfield County, CT	251	9.8%	171,184	7.9%	0.813022

Source: Projected Ridership of the Housatonic Railroad Study, prepared by Market Street Research, 2010

In the MSR study, residents of some areas were oversampled in relation to their actual representation within the region, while other areas were under-sampled. According to MSR, this was necessary to draw statistically accurate conclusions by area. The disproportionate sampling was accounted for by calculating the percentage of eligible residents based on the number of people who responded to the invitation who were screened out of the survey and using the percentage of eligible residents to calculate the total eligible adult population of the sample areas. These findings were used to weight the data.

Initial MSR Ridership Estimates

MSR developed high and low estimates for the number of potential one-way fares that would be generated by the proposed passenger rail service. The ridership estimates assume a five (5) year start-up period. The estimates were developed using the percentage of eligible residents in the study who reported as being very interested in travel between New York City and Berkshire County combined with the

Table 8.2: MSR Estimated Number of One-Way Tickets

Quarter	Low End	High End	Daily	Low End	High End
Spring	444,450	671,843		4,884	7,383
Summer	481,487	727,830		5,291	7,998
Fall	370,375	559,869		4,070	6,152
Winter	296,300	447,895		3,256	4,922
Total	1,592,612	2,407,437		17,501	26,455

Source: Projected Ridership of the Housatonic Railroad Study, prepared by Market Street Research, 2010

average number of trips those residents have taken between the two areas in the past year. To develop the low end estimate, MSR used approximately 1/3 of the eligible residents who indicated being very interested in passenger rail travel between New York City and Berkshire County or northwestern Connecticut. To develop the high-end estimate, MSR used approximately 1/2 of the eligible residents who indicated being very interested in passenger rail travel between New York City and Berkshire County or northwestern Connecticut.

The MSR ridership estimates are provided in Table 8.2. MSR projects a low

end annual estimate of 1,592,612 one-way fares and a high end estimate of 2,407,437 one-way fares generated by the proposed passenger rail service between Danbury, Connecticut and Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Refinement of Ridership Estimates

A median ridership of 2,000,025 (rounded to 2,000,000) annual one-way fares was selected as a reasonable initial estimate for the refinement analysis. Based upon available information and for the purpose of this analysis, the Berkshire Line was segmented into three areas: (1) Danbury-New Milford, (2) other northwest Connecticut and (3) Berkshire County.

Ridership for Danbury/New Milford

The State of Connecticut has sponsored several detailed studies on the potential ridership in the Danbury/New Milford area. A 2009 study titled Danbury Branch Improvement Program sponsored by the State of Connecticut suggests that an annual commuter market

8. RIDERSHIP FORECASTING & PRELIMINARY SERVICE PLAN

ridership of 432,160 annual one-way fares would be generated by a passenger rail service to New York City from the Danbury/New Milford area. For the purpose of this analysis, the annual ridership from the Danbury/New Milford area was reduced to 340,000 annual one-way fares (17% of the median two million one way fares) because the 2009 study did not account for the possibility that commuters from the Danbury/New Milford area would be traveling to destinations in southern Connecticut (e.g. Stamford, Norwalk) and would

Map 8.1: Ridership Study Areas

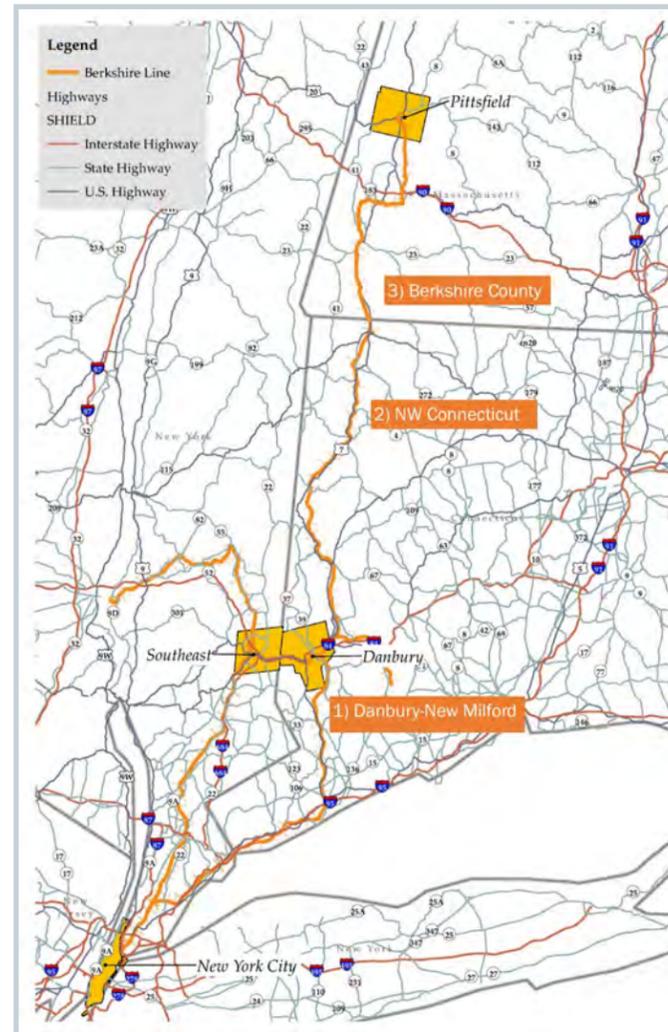


Table 8.3: Ridership by Various Sub-regions

Sub-region	# of One-Way Fares
Danbury/New Milford	340,000
Other NW Connecticut	573,100
Berkshire County	1,086,900
Total	2,000,000

not make use of the proposed passenger rail service. Thus, the refined ridership for the proposed passenger rail service in the Danbury/New Milford area is estimated to be 340,000 annual one-way fares. In order to develop projections for the remaining two areas the 340,000 annual one-way fares is subtracted from the 2,000,000 annual one-way fares for a total of 1,660,000 annual one-way fares.

Ridership for Other Northwest Connecticut & Berkshire County

Allocating the remaining 1,660,000 annual one-way fares between the two remaining areas proved to be more difficult as no known studies exist that analyzed the passenger rail markets in these areas. The simplest way to allocate the remaining ridership is to split the 1,660,000 annual one-way fares between the two areas resulting in each area with an estimated 830,000 annual one-way fares. However, this does not account for the fact that Berkshire County has a greater number of visitors than the other northwestern Connecticut area and that tourism is a major reason given by respondents for traveling to these two areas. The “Economic Benefits of Housatonic Railroad Passenger Service” report estimates based upon hotel tax receipts that Berkshire County has 2.5 million visitor-days per year and northwestern Connecticut has 1.04 million visitor-days per year.

(*Economic Benefits of Housatonic Railroad Passenger Service, Steven Sheppard, 2009*). The difference in the number and popularity of tourist attractions in Berkshire County also favor allocating a higher number of passengers to Berkshire County. Based upon this assumption, the other northwest Connecticut area is allocated 573,100 annual one-way fares (29% of the median two million one-way fares) and Berkshire County is allocated the remaining 1,086,900 annual one way fares (54% of the median two million one way fares).

Allocating Ridership to Proposed Passenger Rail Stations in Berkshire County

The next part of the analysis is to allocate the estimated 1,086,900 annual one-way fares to the four recommended passenger rail station locations in Berkshire County. The recommended passenger rail station locations are located in the Town of Sheffield (conditional), the Town of Great Barrington, the Town of Lee and the City of Pittsfield. To allocate the estimated annual one-way fares for Berkshire County several assumptions are made. One assumption is that the tourist attractions and accommodations in the Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge area will attract a significant number of northbound passengers as these areas have a greater existing connection to the New York City metropolitan area than other locations in Berkshire County. A second assumption is that the southbound non-traditional com-

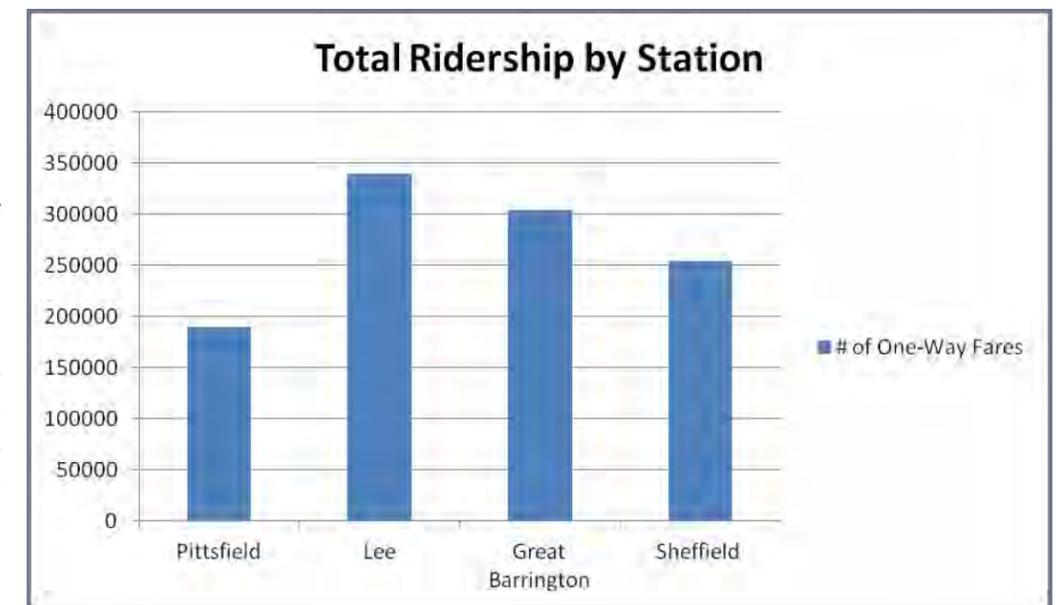
muter market will develop more slowly, especially for the passenger rail stations located near the northern end of the Berkshire Line where the connection to the New York City metropolitan area is less robust.

Detailed Ridership Projections, by Station Location

The anticipated ridership for each of the recommended passenger rail stations is displayed in Table 8.4. The ridership estimates by passenger rail station and the assumptions supporting those estimates were developed by the HRRC.

Pittsfield

The City of Pittsfield has the potential to grow into a larger commercial center with transportation ties to New York City, Westchester County and Southwestern Connecticut; however, these connections are not yet fully developed. Thus, a lower initial number of annual one-way fares are projected for this passenger rail station. The potential exists for the city to develop a non-daily commuter market





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Table 8.4: Forecasted Ridership by Proposed Passenger Rail Station

Pittsfield	% of Total Commuters	% of Total Visitors	Arrivals	Departures	Total
	15%	18%			
Commuter/other			22,500	22,500	45,000
Visitor			72,170	72,170	144,340
Total			94,670	94,670	189,340

Lee	% of Total Commuters	% of Total Visitors	Arrivals	Departures	Total
	31%	31%			
Commuter/other			45,385	45,385	90,700
Visitor			124,312	124,312	248,624
Total			169,697	169,697	339,394

Great Barrington	% of Total Commuters	% of Total Visitors	Arrivals	Departures	Total
	29%	28%			
Commuter/other			41,605	41,605	83,210
Visitor			110,238	110,238	220,476
Total			151,843	151,843	303,686

Sheffield	% of Total Commuters	% of Total Visitors	Arrivals	Departures	Total
	25%	23%			
Commuter/other			36,250	36,250	72,500
Visitor			90,977	90,977	181,954
Total			127,227	127,227	254,454

Source: Housatonic Railroad Company

over the long term, but this is expected to exceed the five (5) year projection of the ridership study. In the near term,

this station is projected to serve as the “stepping off point” for over 70,000 visitors to the Pittsfield area, northern Berk-

shire County and southern Vermont. As Table 8.4 suggests, visitors will constitute a large percentage of the passengers that use the passenger rail station in Pittsfield.

Lee

Without a proposed station in the Town of Lenox, it is assumed that the majority of Lenox residents will travel south to a passenger rail station in the Town of Lee. The estimated number of annual one-way fares for the passenger rail station in Lee includes approximately one-half of the annual estimated one-way fares for passengers whose ultimate destination is Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Lee also will serve the hilltowns to the east and south, The other one-half of the one-way fares for passengers destined for Stockbridge are allocated to the passenger rail station in Great Barrington. The Lee, Lenox, and Stockbridge area is characterized by a large number of second homes, tourist attractions, and numerous hotels, resorts, inns, and bed and breakfasts that are expected to be a significant driver of passenger rail trips to Berkshire County. Similar to the projections for the passenger rail station in the City of Pittsfield, visitors are expected to constitute a large percentage of the passengers that use the passenger rail station in Lee. The potential exists for a non-daily commuter market to develop alongside the existing visitor market as people may view the area as an attractive place to live and work with

direct access to major markets only a few hours away.

Great Barrington

As mentioned above, the estimated number of annual one-way fares for the Great Barrington station include approximately one-half of the estimated annual one-way fares for passengers whose ultimate destination is the Town of Stockbridge. Like the Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge area, Great Barrington has a large number of second homes, tourist attractions, places of accommodation and restaurants, thus visitors are expected to constitute a large percentage of the passengers that use the passenger rail station in Great Barrington. In addition, southern Berkshire County, including Great Barrington, has the most robust connections to the New York City metropolitan area with an existing non-daily commuter market. The potential exists for the non-daily commuter market to grow as people identify Great Barrington as an attractive place to live and work in proximity to the New York City metropolitan area.

Sheffield (Conditional)

If a passenger rail station in Sheffield is constructed, the assumption is that the passenger rail station would serve portions of southern Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut, in particular North Canaan and other towns in Connecticut’s northwest corner. It is expected that the Sheffield passenger rail station would serve as the southern

gateway to Berkshire County and would serve as the “stepping off” point for passengers in southern Berkshire County. The Sheffield passenger rail station is expected to attract a number of southbound passengers (e.g. commuters, second homeowners and students) from these two areas. The Sheffield passenger rail station is expected to serve as an overflow station if the parking at the downtown Great Barrington station is at capacity. Like the Great Barrington passenger rail station, the potential exists for the existing non-daily commuter market to grow as people identify southern Berkshire County as an attractive place to live and work in proximity to the New York City metropolitan area.

Summary

As projected by the MSR study, a large share of the passengers during the first five (5) years of operation of the proposed passenger rail service are expected to be visitors to the region. The MSR study also projects that a smaller number of southbound passengers will use the proposed service as part of a non-daily commuter market that has the potential for growth. These are important projections that became key considerations when determining recommendations for the location of the passenger rail stations, station amenities and transportation options at the passenger rail stations.



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Summary of Other Key Findings from the MSR Marketing Report

Travel Characteristics of Respondents

The questions in this category examined the frequency and preferences of northbound and southbound travelers.

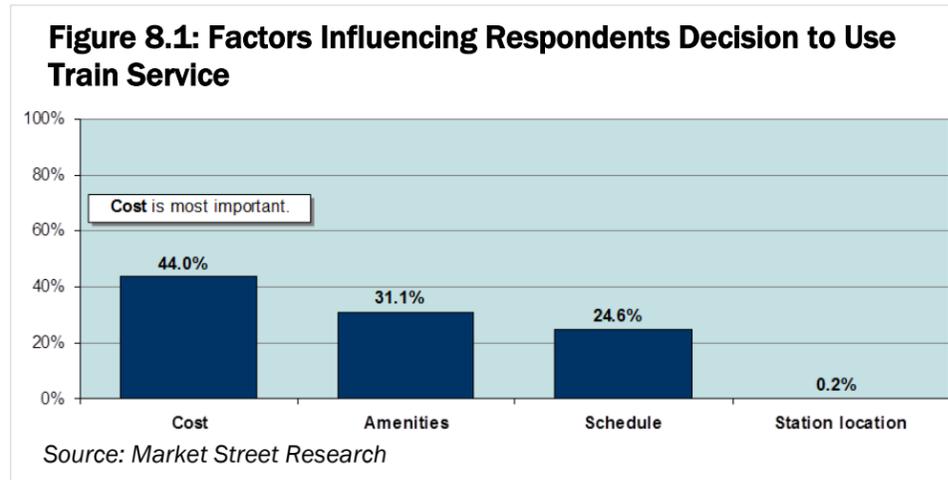
- ◆ Respondents were likely to travel most frequently in the summer.
- ◆ Respondents traveled most frequently on weekends.
- ◆ Preferred transportation mode of respondents for trips of three hours or more
 - Air travel (48%)
 - Private car (33.9%)
 - Passenger Train (15.2%)
- ◆ When asked to indicate their secondary preference, passenger train was first with 38% of respondents identifying it as the top second choice.
- ◆ The majority of respondents (39%) indicated taking the train a few times per year. Seventeen percent (17%) indicated daily train use, while 16.8% indicated using train travel less than once year.

Major Reasons for Travel

The questions in this category examined the purpose of northbound travel, or why travelers from the New York City metro area visit northwestern Connecticut or Berkshire County.

- ◆ Younger respondents identified outdoor activities as their top reason to travel to northwest Connecticut and Berkshire County,

- ◆ Older respondents identified the arts and cultural destinations as the top reason to travel to northwest Connecticut and Berkshire County.
- ◆ Other reasons given by respondents for traveling to northwest Connecticut and Berkshire County are, museums, hiking, music concerts, spas, resorts, yoga, biking, theater, seminars, conferences, skiing, dance concerts, other activities, and other outdoor activities.



Factors Influencing Respondents Decision to Use Train Service

The questions in this category examined the factors that influence the respondent's decision to use train service.

MSR assessed four factors related to train travel (cost, availability of amenities, schedule, and station location) to determine their relative importance in respondent's decision making process to use train service.

1. The most important factor identified by respondents was the cost of the train service. 44.0% of respondents indicated that cost was

the most influential factor when deciding to use the train service.

2. The second most important factor identified by respondents was the on-train amenities. 31.1% of respondents consider the on-train amenities such as food, beverages and free wireless internet when deciding to use the train service.

3. The third most important factor identified by respondents was the schedule of the train service. 24.6% of respondents consider the train schedule as the most important factor when deciding to use the train service.

4. The least important factor identified by respondents was the location of the train station. 0.20% of respondents identified the proximity of the train station they would depart from as the most important factor when deciding to use the train service.

Northbound Respondents Preferred Mode of Transportation Upon Arrival

The questions in this category examined respondents preferred mode of transportation upon arrival at a train station in northwest Connecticut or Berkshire County.

- ◆ Northbound respondents stated a clear preference that rental cars be available upon arriving at passenger rail stations in northwest

Connecticut or Berkshire County.

Considerations from the Key Findings of the MSR Report

- ◆ The proposed passenger rail service must provide competitive pricing when compared to alternative modes of transportation and the service provided must be comfortable, convenient and reliable.
- ◆ The MSR report makes it clear that the majority of riders that will use the proposed service will be northbound riders. A large number of northbound riders will need transportation upon arrival. The report indicates a preference for rental cars at or near the passenger rail stations.
- ◆ The need for transportation might also be filled by taxi-cabs, shuttle buses, bicycle rentals and the BRTA public transportation system. The region and the communities recommended for passenger rail stations should begin considering how these transportation needs could be met.
- ◆ The MSR report indicates that the passenger rail service to Berkshire County will be most frequently used in the summertime and on week-ends by northbound passengers.
- ◆ The MSR report suggests that younger people will be drawn to Berkshire County for outdoor recreation and older people will be drawn to Berkshire County for the arts and cultural attractions. How passengers access these attractions is an important transportation consideration.
- ◆ The MSR report suggests that many of the



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northbound passengers will be taking a multi-day trip to Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut. Thus, the availability of lodging and how northbound passengers will reach these establishments is an important transportation consideration.

- ◆ The MSR report indicates that the average age of the potential train rider is about 20 years younger than the average age of the current visitor suggesting a significant new market for the region. Demographically the younger rider whose average age is in the mid 30's is very comfortable with rail transportation and with not owning a car.

Preliminary Service Plan

As the passenger rail service continues to develop HRRC will continue to modify and adapt its preliminary service plan as it learns more information about the characteristics of the markets to be served. The MSR study provided several important insights into these markets that will influence the initial service plan. In its preliminary service plan, HRRC suggests that it will operate eight (8) round trips per day between its southern connection with Metro North's Southeast Station on the Harlem Line and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Southeast was chosen because the route via Southeast presently offers shorter transit times between the Berkshires and New York City. In addition Metro North operates a very high number of trains between

Southeast and New York City. The ultimate timing of the eight (8) round trips will depend in part on the schedule of the Metro North trains in order to ensure a smooth connection between the two carriers and in part on the availability of capacity to operate through trains directly into Grand Central Station. Final schedules will be developed to meet the needs of potential customers for the service including riders in the four major market groups, visitors to the region, commuters (infrequent and daily) from the region, second homeowners and students. The following is a discussion of a number of factors that will influence HRRC's initial service plan.

Northbound Market Characteristics

The MSR study indicates that a majority of passengers will travel from New York City to the Berkshires and return to New York City. The MSR study also indicates that the large number of the northbound passengers will be visitors to Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut (to a lesser extent) interested in visiting the regions' recreational and cultural attractions. The recreational and cultural attractions in Berkshire County are most frequented during the summer months and to a lesser extent during the fall months. The outdoor winter attractions in Berkshire County, mostly downhill ski areas, may also attract a small number of riders during the winter months. Although the MSR report noted the heavier seasonal summer ridership, it also identified a substantial shoulder season and winter season demand. The

recreational and cultural facilities in Berkshire County are also busiest on the weekend as opposed to the weekdays. These characteristics suggest that the highest level of demand will be on weekends during the summer months and to a lesser extent on the weekends in the fall. Conversely, the lowest demand period will likely be on weekdays during the winter months. While service will be structured to meet this visitor demand, it will also be structured to meet other markets such as commuters from the region and second homeowners.

Southbound Market Characteristics

The MSR study identified a strong commuter market in northwestern Connecticut. Anecdotal evidence such as the number of Massachusetts license plates on vehicles parked at passenger rail stations on Metro North's Harlem Line indicates that there is an existing non-daily commuter market from Berkshire County. These characteristics suggest that a more traditional daily service will be needed to serve passengers in northwestern Connecticut and possibly southern Berkshire County.

Metro North Scheduling

An important factor in the development of HRRC's initial passenger rail schedule will be based on how many trains connect to Metro North trains in Southeast and how many trains can operate through to Grand Central Station. Before a final schedule can be developed, HRRC will need to engage Metro North

in discussions on how to establish the most effective connections between the two carriers. When those discussions are held, working with Metro North, HRRC will refine the schedule to meet the projected market demand.

Discussion

HRRC suggests that a service plan that provides eight (8) full round trips per day originating from its southern connection with Metro North to Pittsfield, Massachusetts will meet the needs of the median ridership projected by MSR.

- ◆ While northbound market characteristics suggest that HRRC should consider developing a peak season (i.e. summer) schedule that provides more frequent northbound service, it is also possible that through trains operating in the Berkshires can offer residents a high level of intra-county options. In addition sufficient service must be operated to assure commuters, daily and infrequent, that their needs can be met. Ultimately additional research will be required before decisions regarding seasonal schedules are made.
- ◆ The southbound market characteristics suggest that HRRC may want to consider an initial approach that consists of operating more frequent shorter runs to access particularly dense markets in northwestern Connecticut and southern Berkshire County, while operating a less frequent southbound service between

Pittsfield, Massachusetts and its southern connection with Metro North. Ultimately service schedules will be designed to meet all market segments and additional research may lead to the conclusion that market segmentation is not beneficial.

- ◆ The ability for passengers to quickly and seamlessly transfer on Metro North's Harlem line is extremely important as it impacts a passenger's overall trip time and comfort which is known to impact a person's decision to use the service more frequently or not at all. HRRC has chosen to connect with Metro North at their Southeast Station on the Harlem line not only because Southeast offers faster through trip times but also because the high frequency of existing service between Southeast and NYC offers customers a wide range of options. Metro North's scheduling has been and will continue to be one of the most important factors for HRRC to consider when developing an initial passenger rail schedule.
- ◆ Although the MSR study indicated that the majority of the ridership will originate in the New York City metropolitan area, a real possibility exists that Berkshire County residents will use the passenger rail service for intra-county travel (e.g. Great Barrington to Pittsfield) if the cost and convenience are competitive to the alternatives. One option for serving



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this market is to use trains that are already serving the market. A service between Pittsfield and NYC that offers 8 trains in each direction may offer good opportunities for local travel at affordable rates without significantly impacting rail operating costs. In addition to providing Berkshire County residents travel options, the service could also be available through innovative ticketing options for visitors to the region to use the service to travel within the region particularly in conjunction with other services such as BRTA.

HRRC will develop a final initial schedule as the proposed passenger rail service becomes closer to fruition taking into account the factors discussed above. HRRC has continued to develop insight into the market through studies such as this and will continue to use new data in its efforts to refine schedules to meet market demand when the service is initiated.

Railroad Facilities Needed to Operate the Service

In addition to the construction of new passenger rail stations with universally accessible platforms, other capital investments will need to occur in the rail infrastructure and equipment for the proposed passenger rail service to operate safely.

Tracks & Structures

The condition of the current railroad track and the need for upgrades are well

documented in Section 3 of this report. The passenger trains will have priority over freight operations, thus a number of passing sidings will need to be constructed or updated to allow safe passing.

Equipment & Rolling Stock

In addition to the necessary track upgrades, HRRC will need to acquire the equipment and rolling stock (rail cars and locomotives) to operate the proposed passenger rail service. The MSR study indicated that passenger comfort is an important factor to consider and that traditional commuter style seating will not be adequate. As the proposed passenger rail service continues to develop, HRRC intends to seek out new or refurbished passenger rail cars that seat an estimated eighty-four (84) passengers per car with comforts similar to traditional intercity passenger coaches.

Service and Layover Facilities

HRRC will also need to construct service and layover facilities to store, service and perform maintenance on its rail cars and locomotives. HRRC currently operates an engine house and shop facility in Canaan, Connecticut for its existing freight service. While that facility is not sufficient to handle the servicing needs of the proposed passenger service it could be used to provide some ancillary services for the passenger rail cars and locomotives. HRRC is also exploring areas in and around Pittsfield, Massachusetts and a range of options for servicing coaches and locomotives and for

a layover facility used for staging and servicing coaches on a daily basis. Facilities will be required that would allow HRRC to conveniently repair, maintain and store locomotives and passenger cars for the next day's southbound travel from Pittsfield. The optimum location for servicing facilities is at or near the end of the line but at this point no specific locations have been identified.

Estimated Trip Times

Table 8.5 shows the estimated trip times for a passenger traveling from Pittsfield to Grand Central Station in New York City. HRRC estimates that the trip will take approximately 3 hours and 49 minutes on a weekend through train and 4 hours and 11 minutes on a weekday with a cross platform transfer to Metro North at Southeast station. For comparison purposes, a passenger leaving Pittsfield, MA and driving to the Metro North station in Wassaic, NY would take approximately 1 hour and 23 minutes according to Google Maps. Assuming a wait time of 10 minutes to park and wait for the train seems reasonable. The trip time from Wassaic, NY to Grand Central Station, according to the Metro North schedule is 2 hours and 1 minute for a through train. For this scenario, the overall trip time would amount to approximately 3 hours and 24 minutes. For another comparison, the drive time from Pittsfield, MA to Hudson, NY is 58 minutes according to Google Maps. Again assuming 10 minutes to park and wait for the train seems reasonable. According to Amtrak,

Table 8.5: HRRC Sample Timetable

Pittsfield—North Canaan—New Milford—Danbury Southeast (Connection with Metro North) - Grand Central					
Mile	Station		Days of Operation		
			Sat-Sun	Weekday	
0	Pittsfield	dp	5:21	5:36	
10.7	Lee	dp	5:38	5:55	
25.6	Great Barrington	dp	6:00	6:15	
37.8	Canaan / Sheffield	dp	6:20	6:35	
54	Cornwall Bridge	dp	6:47	7:02	
62.5	Kent	dp	6:59	7:14	
75.2	New Milford	dp	7:18	7:33	
82	Brookfield	dp	7:27	7:42	
90	Danbury	dp	7:36	7:51	
105	Southeast	ar	7:51	8:06	
	Southeast MNRR	dp	7:52		8:11 Cross Platform to MNRR
	Grand Central Terminal	ar	9:10		9:32

* Estimated sample schedule for a thru train and a Southeast cross platform service

the trip time between Hudson, NY and Penn Station in New York City is approximately 2 hours and 12 minutes. For this scenario the overall trip time amounts to approximately 3 hours and 20 minutes. Lastly, Google Maps indicates that the travel time between Pittsfield, MA and Grand Central Station by automobile is approximately 2 hours and 58 minutes (not including traffic

and time to park). One main benefit of train travel is that a train passenger may use the trip time productively while a driver must devote his/her attention to the road. For a comparison of these trip times see Table 8.6.



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Table 8.6: Estimated Trip Times – Pittsfield, MA to New York City	
Scenario	Overall Trip Time
Automobile from Pittsfield, MA to New York City	2 hours and 58 minutes <i>(not including traffic and time to park)</i>
Automobile from Pittsfield, MA to Wassaic, NY: Metro North Service from Wassaic, NY to Grand Central Station	3 hours and 24 minutes
Automobile from Pittsfield, MA to Hudson, NY: Amtrak from Hudson, NY to Penn Station	3 hours and 20 minutes
HRRC Passenger Rail Service from Pittsfield, MA to Grand Central Station	3 hours and 49 minutes (through train) 4 hours and 11 minutes (cross platform connection)
<i>*Automobile trip times from Google Maps; Train trip times provided by the respective railroad companies.</i>	

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9. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS & IMPACTS

Anticipated Benefits & Impacts of the Proposed Passenger Rail Service

The proposed passenger rail service will have benefits and impacts on all six (6) of the Berkshire Line communities regardless of whether the community hosts a passenger rail station. The purpose of this section is to discuss the anticipated benefits and impacts shared by all Berkshire Line communities. The benefits and impacts unique to the communities with recommended passenger rail stations are discussed in the station area plans in Section 7 of this report.

Anticipated Benefits of the Proposed Passenger Rail Service

The proposed passenger rail service is projected to have significant economic benefits for Berkshire County, as well as positive transportation benefits. The two types of benefits are discussed in greater detail in the sections below.

Anticipated Economic Benefits

In 2011, HRRC engaged the Center for Creative Community Development to conduct an analysis of the economic impact if passenger rail service were restored to Pittsfield, Massachusetts along the Berkshire Line. The Center for Creative Community Development is a research center affiliated with Williams College. The following section is a summary of the report titled “Economic Benefits of Housatonic Railroad Passenger Service” (the Economic Report) co-authored by Professor Stephen Sheppard and Dr. Kay Oehler from the Center for Creative Community Development.

Background of the Report

The Economic Report considered the economic impact of the re-establishment of passenger rail

service along the Berkshire Line over a ten (10) year period. The ten year study projection was divided into two phases: construction and operation. The first three (3) years involve capital improvements and construction (construction phase) and the remaining seven (7) years are attributed to the operation of the proposed passenger rail service (operation phase). Information on the demand for passenger rail service used in the Economic Report was obtained from the 2010 Market Street Research marketing study. The Economic Report bases its projections on the state of the local economy in 2009. The study area for the Economic Report includes all of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Litchfield County, Connecticut, and a part of Fairfield County, Connecticut. Fairfield County was included from Danbury north to the Fairfield County line. The part of Fairfield County located south of Danbury was not included because it was deemed to be served adequately by Metro North.

Existing Economy in the Sheppard Report Study Area

The study area has a population of approximately half a million people and employment of more than 280,000 people. The economic output of the study area totals almost \$25 billion dollars, with the majority of the economic output coming from Connecticut.

The larger economic sectors vary between the two regions. The Massachusetts sub-region (i.e. Berkshire County) is comprised largely of light industry and service-related employment. Formerly a dominant industry, the paper mills still serve as

Table 9.1: Structure of the Economy in the Sheppard Report Study Area

	Connecticut portion	Massachusetts portion	Total
Population	376,034	129,288	505,322
Households	144,012	54,862	198,874
Total employment	203,798	77,877	281,675
Gross regional product (2009\$)	\$19.2 billion	\$5.4 billion	\$24.6 billion
Average household income (2009\$)	\$158,871	\$100,605	\$142,798
Estimated tourist visitor-days	1,044,256	2,500,000	3,544,256
Sector with most employment	Real estate establishments	Restaurants and bars	Real estate establishments
Sector with greatest labor income (2009\$)	State/local government, non-education	Private hospitals	Offices of physicians and dentists
Sector with greatest output (2009\$)	Owner-occupied housing (imputed)	Paper mills*	Owner-occupied housing (imputed)

Source: Economic Benefits of Housatonic Railroad Passenger Service, Steven Sheppard, 2009
 *With the closure of five paper mills in 2008-2009 this may no longer be true.

the largest output in the Massachusetts sub-region. The economy of the Connecticut sub-region is dominated by employment characterized by suburban development (i.e. real estate and health care). Tourism is less developed in the Connecticut portion, and there may be future opportunities for tourism with passenger rail service.

Projections from the Sheppard Report

The projected economic benefits during the two phases (construction and operation) of the ten year projection period and the benefits to various economic sectors are discussed in great detail in the Economic Report. For the purpose of this report, the key points from those discussions are provided below.

Economic Benefits by Phase

Construction Period

HRRC estimates that necessary capital and construction improvements will cost over \$200 million dollars and take approximately three (3) years to implement. The Economic Report projects that **this investment is expected to create an estimated 733 new jobs and output for the study area is expected to increase by \$100 million dollars during the construction and capital improvement period.** (p. 11). The economic report highlights considerable job creation in the following fields: architectural, engineering and related services (24 new jobs), food services (~17 new jobs), real estate establishments (~14 new jobs), food stores (9 new jobs), and physicians and dentists (9 new jobs). (p.12).

9. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS & IMPACTS

Operations Period

According to the Economic Report, **during the operations phase, the economic output of the study area is expected to increase by \$33.5 million dollars per year (not including tourism related impacts) and the operation of the passenger rail is expected to create 431 new permanent jobs.** (p. 12).

Economic Benefits by Economic Sector

Impact on Regional Tourism

Using hotel tax receipts, the Berkshire Visitors Bureau estimated that roughly 2.5 million visitor-days are spent in Berkshire County each year. The Economic Report estimates that northwest Connecticut receives 1.04 million visitor-days annually. **Taking into account sensitivity to transportation costs, the Economic Report suggests that the passenger rail service could result in an 8.65% increase in tourist traffic (or 33,410 visitor-days in Connecticut and 79,985 visitor-days in Massachusetts).** (p.14).

The Economic Report used past survey data to estimate the amount tourists spend when in the region. In 2007, Tanglewood concertgoers were asked about how much they spent on specific items in-county during the day of the show. The Tanglewood study provided an average daily expenditure,

and the current analysis updated the amounts to 2011 prices (using the Consumer Price Index). The estimated per visitor spending was multiplied by the expected increase in visitors to determine the direct economic impact of tourism, and a regional inter-industry model was used to assess the full impacts of tourism. According to the Economic Report the **passenger rail service is expected to bring in an additional 126 new jobs and an additional \$12.5 million dollars in economic output from tourism each year.** (p.15).

The Economic Report projects a total overall **economic output of over \$46 million dollars per year when the projections from the operation of the passenger rail and the impacts on tourism are**

combined. (p. 16). When the employment projections are combined for the operation of the passenger rail system and for the impact on tourism a **total of 557 jobs can be expected for as long as the passenger rail system continues to operate.** (p.16).

While the Economic Report estimated an increase of nearly 80 thousand visitor days per day to the region, it should be noted that the market analysis determined that the average age of train riders is estimated to be substantially younger than the average age of existing visitors to the region. The demographics of the average train rider suggest that rail passenger service will attract a substantial volume of new visitors to the region resulting in greater short and long term economic benefits.

Impact on the Public Sector

According to the Economic Report, during the first decade of service, the passenger rail service is expected to bring in nearly \$29.5 million dollars in additional tax revenues to state and local governments. **State and local governments are expected to collect almost \$3.7 million dollars more per year**

during the three year construction period. (p.16). **During the operations period, state and local governments in the study area could collect roughly \$2.6 million dollars more every year.** (p.16). Revenues are expected to increase due to the expansion of the local economy and the anticipated increase in tourism.

The federal government could collect more than \$7.8 million dollars per year during construction period and nearly \$3.5 million dollars more per year during the operations period. (p.16).

Impact on the Housing Market

The Economic Report suggests that it is very difficult to assess the impacts on the local housing market when there are so many variables at play (e.g. local zoning and land use regulations, ease of access to New York City, speed at which building occurs, availability of labor and supplies, etc.). According to the Economic Report, studies in urban areas have shown that property values near passenger rail stations can rise between 1-2% or even up to 30%; however, it is difficult to discern whether the same effect would occur in a rural area and to what degree.

In order to evaluate the impact on property values, the Economic Report used two methods: 1) analyzing American Community Survey data to compare impacts on property values and new construction in a similar area (i.e. Wassauc Station) and 2) applying the previously mentioned study results to American Community Survey data on property values within five miles of proposed stations. **Based on these analyses, the Economic Report projects that residential properties located close to the rail line may increase in value to a small degree, creating between \$310 and \$619**

Table 9.2: Accrued Benefits During First Decade of Proposed Passenger Rail Service

The Economic Report projects that the re-introduction of passenger rail service along the Berkshire Line will generate more than \$625 million dollars from the production/sale of additional goods and services during its first decade of service. Additionally, the Economic Report projects that more than 600 new local jobs will be created, local tax revenue will grow and municipalities will experience decreased road maintenance costs.

The following chart highlights the major economic benefits of the reinstatement of passenger rail service over the first ten years as projected in the Economic Report.

<i>Increases in ...</i>	Connecticut	Massachusetts	Combined
Economic output over ten years	\$271,495,767	\$343,970,290	\$625,074,159
Employment	221	425	610
State and local tax revenues	\$11,353,143	\$17,510,471	\$29,452,747
Federal tax revenues	\$22,654,920	\$27,944,938	\$55,020,326
Property values	\$202,695,948	\$101,206,932	\$309,678,630
<i>Decreases in ...</i>	Connecticut	Massachusetts	Combined
Road maintenance costs	\$481,719	\$899,157	\$1,380,869
Costs due to fatal accidents	\$2,644,180	\$4,560,668	\$7,204,848
Traffic fatalities (persons)	2.94	5.04	7.98
Global mean temperature	2.2 10 ⁻⁷ degrees Celsius		



9. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS & IMPACTS

million (1.5% and 3% rise in value) in additional wealth. (p.24). This would equate to only a modest change for individual homeowners (e.g. \$1,500 - \$10,000) and would be more likely to occur close to station stops. (p.24).

Furthermore, given what has been observed in the area around the Metro North extension, **these changes would not be expected to bring a major upheaval in the housing markets. Modest changes of this magnitude are generally not enough to cause large changes in overall patterns of land use or levels of house building activity.** (p. 24).

Transportation Benefits

- ◆ The proposed passenger rail service will create a new transportation alternative for intra-county travel by Berkshire County residents and depending on cost and convenience, passenger rail service may become a viable transportation alternative. The demand for intra-county passenger rail service is not known at this time as the MSR study focused on passengers originating their trips from the New York metropolitan area. The concept of intra-county passenger rail service in Berkshire County needs to be studied further and it may represent an additional source of revenue for the operators of the passenger rail service. It is important to note that the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county travel will be most viable if the passenger rail stations are built in the downtown areas.
- ◆ The Economic Report suggests that automobile traffic and road congestion on local and state roads will be decreased. (p. 24-25). Although this may be true for most of the study area, there is the potential for traffic and congestion to increase in close proximity to the

passenger rail stations.

- ◆ The Economic Report also suggests that communities in the study area will experience a decrease in road maintenance costs. (p. 24-25). Although this may be true for most of the study area, there is the potential for additional wear and tear on road infrastructure in close proximity to the passenger rail stations if a large number of passengers use vehicles (e.g. rental cars) after arriving at the passenger rail stations.
- ◆ The Economic Report also projects a reduction of 151,744,150 vehicle miles traveled per year and a reduction in fatal car accidents of 1.14 per year. (p. 26-27).

Anticipated Impacts of the Proposed Passenger Rail Service

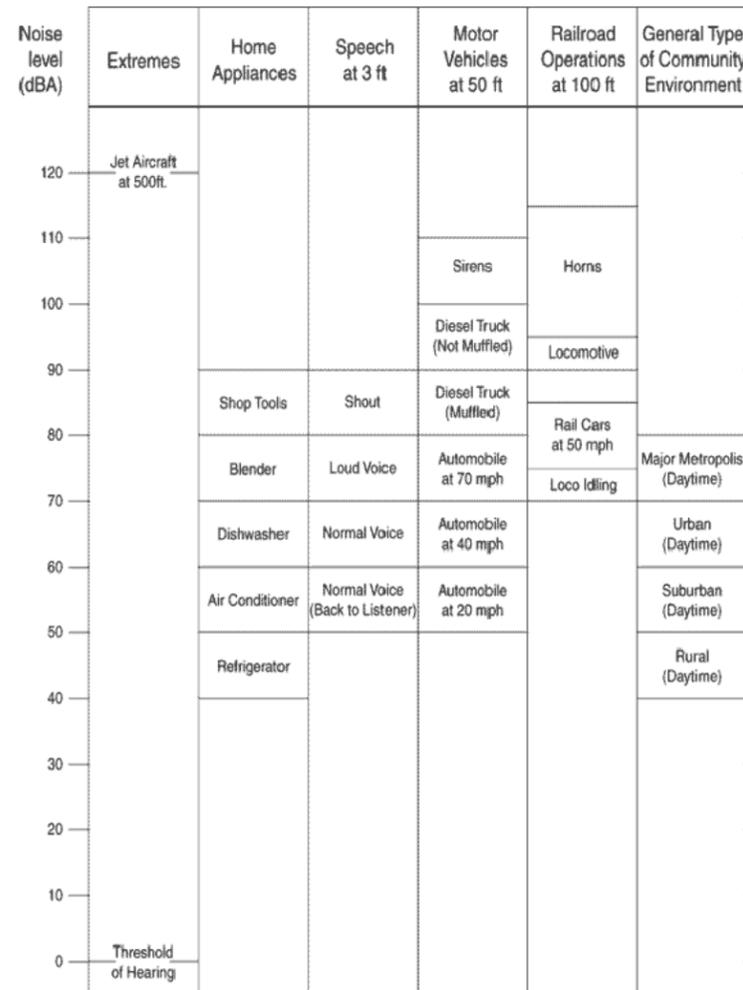
The most common types of impacts from passenger rail trains are noise and vibration. The duration and frequency of these impacts is an important consideration in determining the overall impact on the community.

Anticipated Noise Impacts

The proposed passenger rail service is not expected to create significant noise impacts in the Berkshire Line communities. However, the passenger rail service will create localized noise impacts at public at grade crossings where federal regulations require locomotive engineers to routinely sound the locomotive horn. Throughout the rest of the rail corridor the train noise, although audible, will be short in duration as the

passenger rail train will be traveling at a higher rate of speed and will have a small number of train cars. The following section includes a discussion of the anticipated levels of train noise, a discussion on the federal train horn rule and its exceptions, and a discussion on commonly used methods and strategies to mitigate the impacts of train noise.

Figure 9.1: Comparison of Different Noise Levels with Train Noise



Source: Federal Railroad Administration

Comparison of the Different Levels of Passenger Rail Train Noise

The major sources of noise from passenger rail trains are from the locomotive engine, wheel/rail interaction and the locomotive horn. This section includes a comparative chart between horn noise and everyday noises and includes a discussion on how the noise from the proposed passenger trains is expected to differ from the noise created by the existing freight service.

As shown in Figure 9.1, rural daytime noise is estimated to be approximately 40 to 50 decibels and suburban daytime noise is estimated to be 50 to 60 decibels. The majority of the Berkshire Line passes through areas that can be characterized as rural with a few suburban locations. The operating locomotive (90 dBA), rail cars (75 dBA to 80 dBA) and locomotive horn (96 dBA to 110 dBA) will be a noticeable source of noise in the environment. Although the passenger rail train will be a noticeable source of noise in the local environment it will be temporary and passing. Assuming HRRC operates eight (8) full round way trips for passenger rail service daily and 1 round way trip daily for its freight service a single point along the rail corridor will be subject to the temporary noise eighteen (18) times a day, with the majority of those disturbances occurring during the daylight hours.

Current Freight Train Noise Compared to Proposed Passenger Train Noise

The following section describes how the noise from the proposed passenger rail service will differ from the noise created by the existing freight service. It is important to remember that the proposed passenger rail service is not replacing the freight service, thus the noise impacts will be cumulative.

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- The proposed passenger rail service will increase the number of trains that pass a single point along the Berkshire Line from two (2) passes per day to eighteen (18)

	Existing Freight Service	Proposed Passenger Rail Service
# of train passes per day	2	16
Average speed of train	25 mph	44 mph (max - 59 mph)
Length of Train	20 cars	8 cars
Rail Type	Jointed rail	Continuous welded rail

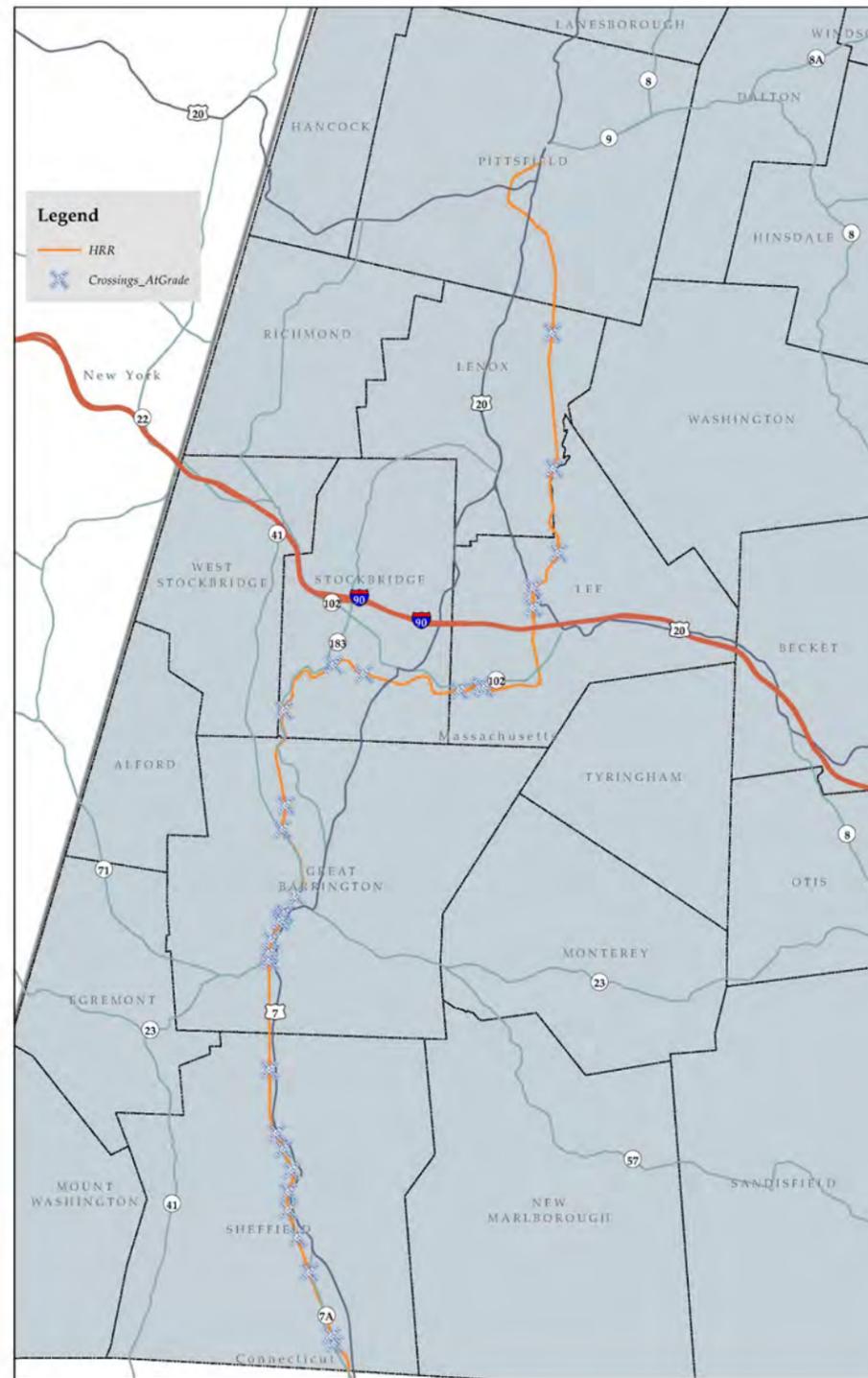
(16 passenger + 2 freight) passes per day thereby increasing the number of noise episodes attributed to the train operations in a 24 hour period.

- The duration of a noise episode for a proposed passenger train is expected to be substantially less than that of the current freight trains due to the dynamics of a passenger train compared to the dynamics of a freight train.
- The duration of a noise episode for a proposed passenger train is expected to be less than that of a current freight train because the speed of the proposed passenger train is expected to be greater. A six car passenger train traveling at 30 mph will pass a single point in approximately 15 seconds and thus the duration of the noise event associated with a passing passenger train is short.
- The use of continuous welded rail in place of the jointed rail will decrease the noise created during the wheel to rail interaction of both passenger and freight trains. Removal of the joints between rails eliminates the traditional clickety clack of rail wheels rolling over the rail joints.

Federal Horn Rule

The loudest and most easily recognized train noise is from the locomotive horn. According to the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) Final Rule on the Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings (49 CFR 222) (Horn Rule) a locomotive engineer must begin to sound the locomotive horn at least 15 seconds, and no more than 20 seconds, in advance of all public at grade crossings. The Horn Rule also requires that a train horn be no louder than 110 decibels and no quieter than 96 decibels. Because the Horn Rule applies to all public at grade crossings those areas in close proximity to public at grade crossings will be uniquely affected. (See Map 9.1.) The Horn Rule does contain two exceptions. The first exception is the designation of a “quiet zone” and the second exception is the use of way-side horns. In both cases, the railroad is not responsible for the cost of the infrastructure required to meet the requirements of the exceptions. Both exceptions are discussed in greater detail below.

Map 9.1: Public At-grade Crossings



Exception # 1 - Establishing “Quiet Zones or Partial Quiet Zones”

Berkshire Line communities concerned about train horn noise should explore the creation of a quiet zone or partial quiet zone. The purpose of the federal Horn Rule is “to provide for safety at public highway-rail grade crossings by requiring locomotive horn use at public highway-rail grade crossings except in quiet zones established and maintained in accordance with [associated regulations]”. A quiet zone is a section of a rail line at least one half mile in length that contains one or more consecutive public highway-rail grade crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded. A partial quiet zone is a quiet zone where locomotive horns are not sounded during a specified time period each day. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations or to comply with other federal regulations or railroad operating rules. Localities desiring to establish a quiet zone are first required to mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of a train horn.

The FRA has adopted regulations and a process for the designation of areas as “quiet zones.” The process can be found in a document titled “How to Create a Quiet Zone” located at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L03055> or an explanatory brochure titled “Guide to the Quiet Zone Establishment Process” located at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L04781>.

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Because the absence of a routine horn sounding increases the risk of a crossing collision, a public authority that desires to establish a quiet zone will be required to mitigate this additional risk. At a minimum, each public highway crossing within a quiet zone must be equipped with active warning devices: flashing lights, gates, constant warning time devices and power out indicators. In addition, one of the following conditions must be met to create a quiet zone. Please note that the various risk calculations discussed below are explained in the “How to Create a Quiet Zone” document referenced above. See the inset for definitions of the following terms.

1. The Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) is less than or equal to the Nationwide Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT) without additional safety measures such as Supplementary Safety Measures (SSM) or Alternative Safety Measures (ASM).
2. The QZRI is less than or equal to the Risk Index with Horns (RIWH) with additional safety measures such as SSMs or ASMs
3. Install SSMs at every public highway-rail crossing. This is the best method to reduce risks in a proposed quiet zone and to enhance safety.

Exception # 2 - Use of Wayside Horns

The Horn Rule also provides another method for reducing the impact of routine locomotive horn sounding when trains approach public highway rail-grade crossings. A wayside horn may be installed at highway rail grade crossings with flashing lights, gates, constant warning time devices and power out indicators. Wayside horns are po-

Definitions

- ◆ The QZRI is the average risk for all public highway-rail crossings in the quiet zone, including the additional risk for absence of train horns and any reduction in risk due to the risk mitigation measures.
- ◆ The NSRT is the level of risk calculated annually by averaging the risk at all of the Nation’s public highway-rail grade crossings equipped with flashing lights and gates where train horns are routinely sounded.
- ◆ The RIWH is the average risk for all public highway-rail crossings in the proposed quiet zone when locomotive horns are routinely sounded.

sitioned at the crossing and will sound when the warning devices are activated. The sound from the horn is directed down the roadway, which greatly reduces the distance footprint of the audible warning.



Noise Mitigation

The three main components of noise are 1) the noise source, 2) the source-to-receiver pathway, and 3) the receiver. Noise can be mitigated by ad-

ressing one, both or all of the components of noise. In general, the railroad has jurisdiction over treating the noise source. The railroad, local government and/or private property owners may have jurisdiction over various parts of the source-to-receiver pathway and the local government and/or private property owners share jurisdiction over the receiver. This breakdown suggests that the railroad, local governments and private property owners might all have a role to play in mitigating the noise impacts from the proposed passenger rail service.

Table 9.4 on the following page includes various noise mitigation techniques recommended by the FRA. The following section discusses the different noise mitigation techniques.

Noise Source Treatments

The operator of the passenger rail service is encouraged to adopt best industry practices when it comes to noise that may be addressed at the noise source. The operator should consider industry best practices for wheel treatments and vehicle treatments to minimize the noise impacts to the six (6) Berkshire Line communities. The operator should also take any other reasonable steps to minimize noise from the source.

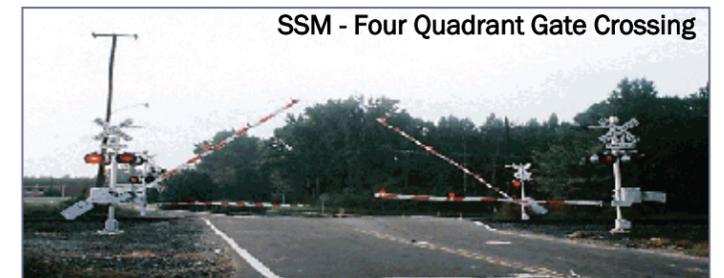
Source to Receiver Pathway Treatments

The operator, local governments and private property owners are encouraged to employ best practices when it comes to installing source to receiver pathway treatments. These entities may consider erecting sound barriers to help dissipate the noise generated from the rail operations. In a highway setting, sound barriers cost approximately \$25-\$35 per square foot of installed noise barrier, not including design or inspection costs.

Another mitigation measure is to create or maintain a distance between the noise source and the receiver through the acquisition of land or easements to serve as a noise buffer, although this strategy is not particularly relevant in already developed areas.

Receiver Treatments

The local governments and private property owners are encouraged to take action when it comes to installing receiver treatments. Sound barriers as discussed above are a common mitigation



SSM - Four Quadrant Gate Crossing



SSM - Gates with Channelization



SSM - Gates with Median



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measure. In addition to sound barriers, making modifications to buildings is another mitigation measure. Adding additional insulation and acoustic window and doors may provide some relief from noise particularly in circumstances where

the buildings are located close to the railroad right-of-way or crossing. A GIS analysis shows that 171 structures are located within fifty (50) feet of the center line of the Berkshire Line right-of-way.

Table 9.4: Summary of Noise Mitigation Measures

Application	Mitigation Measure	Effectiveness	
SOURCE	Stringent Vehicle & Equipment Noise Specifications	Varied	
	Operational Restrictions	Varied	
	Resilient or Damped Wheels	For Rolling Noise on Tangent Track:	2 dB
		For Wheel Squeal on Curved Track:	10-20 dB
	Vehicle Skirts	6-10 dB	
	Undercar Absorption	5 dB	
	Spin-slide control (prevents flats)	**	
	Wheel Truing (eliminates wheel flats)	**	
	Rail Grinding (eliminates corrugations)	**	
	Turn Radii greater than 1000 ft	Avoids Squeal	
	Rail Lubrication on Sharp Curves	Reduces Squeal	
	Movable-Point Frogs (reduce rail gaps at crossovers)	Reduces Impact Noise	
PATH	Sound Barriers close to Vehicles	6-15 dB	
	Sound Barriers at ROW Line	3-10 dB	
	Alteration of Horizontal & Vertical Alignments	Varied	
	Acquisition of Buffer Zones	Varied	
	Ballast on At-Grade Guideway	3 dB	
	Resilient Track Support on Aerial Guideway	Varied	
RECEIVER	Acquisition of Property Rights for Construction of Sound Barriers	5-10 dB	
	Building Noise Insulation	5-20 dB	

** These mitigation measures work to maintain a rail system in its as-new condition. Without incorporating them into the system, noise levels could increase up to 10 dB.
Source: FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment

Anticipated Vibration Impacts

Vibration is not expected to be a significant issue along the majority of the Berkshire Line; however, a GIS analysis shows that 51 structures abut or are located in very close proximity to the Berkshire Line right-of-way. Due to the limitation of the data available it was not possible to determine if the structures were outbuildings or dwellings. The replacement of the existed jointed rail with continuous welded rail should proactively address significant vibration issues. In cases where vibration is an issue or is expected to be an issue, the operator, local government and the private property owner are encouraged to employ best practices to address the issue. If significant vibration issues do occur the following mitigation measures may be considered.

Equipment Maintenance

The operator should use industry best practices to maintain its equipment as improperly maintained wheel and rail surfaces can lead to increases in vibration levels.

Location of Special Trackwork

A large portion of vibration impacts at transit facilities are due to wheel impacts at turnouts and crossovers. Thus, relocating special trackwork and proactively identifying potential vibration problem areas when the special trackwork is installed can help to reduce vibration levels.

Building Modifications & Relocation

In certain instances buildings can be modified or foundations stabilized to help control vibration. In situations where relocation is possible, an owner might consider relocating a structure further away from the railroad right-of-way.

Operational Changes

Reducing the speed of the train is a simple method of reducing vibration. The operator should also consider equipment that makes less vibration or altering its schedule to make fewer trips at more sensitive parts of the day, particularly at night.

Buffer Zones

Another mitigation measure is to create or maintain a distance between the vibration source and the receiver through the acquisition of land or easements to serve as a vibration buffer, although this strategy is not particularly relevant in already developed areas.

Anticipated Public Safety Impacts

The increased frequency and speed of the proposed passenger trains presents a new safety concern for the Berkshire Line communities. A passenger rail train traveling nearly sixty (60) miles per hour is much faster than a freight train traveling at 1/2 that speed. The operator, local governments and private property owners are encouraged to take steps to ensure that the public safety is protected.

One of those steps may be to educate the public about the safety issues around passenger rail trains. In other localities where passenger rail services have been introduced, public authorities, rail carriers, federal and state safety officials and citizens have worked together with an organization called Operation Lifesaver to develop awareness and safety programs along the rail lines. More information can be found at <http://oli.org/>.



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Public Participation in the Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Project

This chapter describes the public outreach and public participation efforts conducted throughout the passenger rail station location and design analysis project. The first section describes the different public meetings from the start of the project through its conclusion. The second section describes key results and findings from the public meetings and an online survey conducted in tandem with the Summer 2013 public meetings.

Summary of Public Outreach and Public Participation

Throughout the passenger rail station location and design analysis, an effort has been made to inform the public and to receive the input of community stakeholders. The public process has involved public meetings, meetings with local officials, and working group meetings with local planning boards, select boards and interested community members. Table 10.1 summarizes the dates, location and attendance of each meeting held.

Meetings with Public Officials (April 2013)

The first two meetings held in April 2013 were organized with HRRC, and were oriented toward the planning and select boards of each of the Berkshire Line communities. Approximately twenty-five (25) individuals attended

these meetings, representing BRPC and the Towns of Lenox, Lee, Great Barrington and the City of Pittsfield. Attendees included Town Managers and Administrators, town and city planners, and members of the planning boards and select boards. HRRC also participated in these meetings and provided answers to questions about the proposed passenger rail service. At these meetings public officials were provided the opportunity to comment on the project methodology and to share preliminary thoughts on passenger rail station locations in their communities.

Public Meetings (June – July 2013)

The two public meetings were focused on informing the public about the station location analysis and to receive feedback from the general public regarding station location preference and station design and amenities. The results of those conversations about station design and amenities are discussed in the services and amenities section below. The public meetings were held at the Lenox Town Hall and Monument Mountain High School in Great Barrington. Attendees included members of the public, public officials from the Berkshire Line communities, BRPC staff, regional stakeholders such as the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from MassDOT. The first half of the meeting included a joint presentation by BRPC staff and HRRC. For the second half of each meeting the attendees were asked

to form small groups at which BRPC or HRRC staff moderated a discussion on a number of topics associated with the return of passenger rail service, including attendee’s preference on the types of amenities and services they would like to see at a passenger rail stations in Berkshire County.

Stakeholder Working Group Meetings (December 2013 - May 2014)

Project staff held a number of working group meetings with the six (6) Berkshire Line communities. The purpose of the working group meetings with the public officials was to review the identified target areas; identify preferred target areas within each community; and to identify potential passenger rail station sites within the preferred target areas. Attendees included members of the planning boards, select boards and interested community members. At these meetings, attendees prioritized target areas, selecting two (2) to three (3) preferred areas in their community for the location of a passenger rail station. In some communities, the public officials identified preferred sites as well. These meetings provided project staff with the opportunity to vet

target areas with local stakeholders, and to clearly discuss both the benefits and challenges of siting a passenger rail station in a specific area. All six communities identified potential sites, even if they did not support the location of a passenger rail station in their community.

Final Public Meetings (July - September 2014)

Three public meetings were held to present the study’s findings and gather additional public input. The public meetings were held at the Great Barrington Fire Station, the Pittsfield Intermodal Center, and Greylock Elementary School in Lee. Each meeting began with a joint presentation by BRPC staff and HRRC. After the presentation, questions and comments were invited and attendees were encouraged to examine posters around the room.

Online Forums

Working with a local group called “Bring Back the Trains”, project staff provided presentations and informational material in two (2) online forums, held in the summer and fall. This enabled people to participate remotely and learn of the project despite a geographic distance from Berkshire County. A number of attendees at the online forums resided outside of Berkshire County. These forums were organized and hosted in such a way that attendees could interact with project staff and HRRC.

Online Survey

Project staff developed an online survey for members of the public to identify preferred station locations, identify how they plan to use passenger rail service, and identify the amenities or services they think are most important

Table 10.1: Public Participation			
	No. of Attendees	Date	Location
Town Official Meeting	13	April 23, 2013	Great Barrington
Town Official Meeting	12	April 24, 2013	Lenox
Public Meeting 1	50*	June 26, 2013	Lenox
Public Meeting 2	39*	July 10, 2013	Great Barrington
Working Group Meeting (x 6)	68	December 2013 - May 2014	Sheffield, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee, Lenox, Pittsfield
Public Meeting and Hearing (x 2)	50	July 23, 2014 August 6, 2014	Great Barrington Pittsfield
Final Public Meeting	13	Sept. 22, 2014	Lee
Total	245		
*Not all attendees signed in, so more than the listed number attended.			

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to have at a passenger rail station in Berkshire County. Approximately 140 individuals responded to the survey. Nearly twenty (20) percent of the respondents were from Great Barrington; twelve (12) percent were from Lenox, and eleven (11) percent of the respondents were from Pittsfield. Twenty-seven (27) respondents indicated they were from a non-Berkshire community—of these twenty-seven; nine (9) were from a New York or Connecticut community close to Berkshire County, such as Hillsdale or Copake Falls. In terms of how the passenger rail service and station would be used, just over half (51.1%) of the online survey respondents indicated they would use the service within Berkshire County. The online survey was designed to ask the same questions that attendees were asked at the June/July 2013 public meetings. The results of the online surveys are discussed in the findings section below.

Commission Meetings & Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

Project staff presented updates on the project to the alternates and delegates of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, as well as the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). A formal presentation on the preliminary findings and recommendations was made to the MPO on June 24, 2014.

Local and Regional Media

An article written for Berkshire Trade and Commerce periodical helped highlight how passenger rail service in the Berkshire region could strengthen economic development opportunity. The proposed return of passenger rail sparked interest and comment from a number of community members who expressed their perspective or support in letters to the editor in the Berkshire Eagle, the county's most widely circulated newspaper. The project has received constant media coverage in local and regional newspapers, public radio news, and local cable channels. A partial listing of media items is included in Appendix C.

Correspondence

As the project progressed, BRPC also received written comments from community members expressing thoughts and concerns regarding the proposed passenger rail service. Overall, the project received a number of comments and inquiries via e-mail and written letter.

Communication and Outreach

BRPC developed a broad and diverse list of stakeholders to invite to the preliminary public meetings. For the initial stakeholder meetings, and the subsequent working group meetings, BRPC sent out formal invitations and posted the meetings at local town offices. BRPC generated fliers and posters for public meetings, and distributed these via the stakeholder list, and the

list of meeting attendees that grew as the project progressed. Project updates were periodically provided BRPC's bi-monthly newsletter, Common Ground. Project materials and announcements were provided on BRPC's website.

Findings from the Public Outreach

This section discusses the findings from the public outreach undertaken as a part of this project. The public meetings, stakeholder working group meetings and the online survey were important tools in identifying the four (4) recommended passenger rail station locations. The meetings were also useful to help identify the aspects of the proposed passenger rail service that garner community support and which aspects cause concern.

The following reasons for supporting the proposed passenger rail service were identified:

- ◆ The increased convenience of boarding a train to New York City in Berkshire County instead of driving to the Wassaic Station in Dutchess County, New York.
- ◆ The benefits of increased connectivity for residents who can work remotely for much of the week but may need to visit places in Connecticut or New York for meetings.
- ◆ An increase in the number of visitors traveling to the Berkshires for

travel and tourism activities.

The following reasons for concern regarding the proposed passenger rail service were identified:

- ◆ The potential for increased housing costs for home owners, future home owners, and renters.
- ◆ The potential for an increase in noise and vibration due to the more frequent train traffic along the rail line.
- ◆ The potential for a decrease in property values immediately adjacent to the passenger rail station or along the rail corridor itself.
- ◆ The current physical condition of the rail track and potential impacts to the safety of both passengers and communities.

Overall, both public officials and the general public expressed support for the return of passenger rail service to Berkshire County and four (4) of the Berkshire Line communities voiced support for a passenger rail station in their community: Pittsfield, Great Barrington, Lenox and Lee. Public officials in the remaining two communities: Stockbridge and Sheffield, expressed reluctance and concern over the proposed passenger rail service.

General Findings

- ◆ In terms of how the passenger rail service would be used, just over half (51.1%) of the online survey respondents indicated they would use the service within Berkshire County. Nearly ninety-six (96) percent indicated they would use the service for travel to and from New York City.
- ◆ In terms of trip frequency, nearly seventy-five (75) percent of respondents indicated they would use the train for travel between one and six one way trips per month.
- ◆ The most common reason for travel among survey respondents was tourism/recreation, visits to family/friends. Nearly forty (40) percent indicated they would use train travel for work.
- ◆ Of the 140 survey respondents, 134 expressed support for the return of passenger rail service to Berkshire County.

Findings on Station Amenities and Services

At the public meetings and through the online survey, attendees/respondents were asked to identify and prioritize the amenities and services they felt important to have at a passenger rail station. Table 10.2 displays the services and amenities by category and the numbers in each column reflect the frequency which the service or amenity

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was categorized as a high priority by the attendees/respondents.

- ◆ In the public meetings, the high priority amenities or services included e-ticket kiosks, parking, wireless internet, safe pedestrian access, and passenger pick-up/drop-off.
- ◆ In the online surveys, the highest priority

amenities or services identified were safe pedestrian access, followed by electronic kiosks, restrooms, and passenger drop-off/pick-up.

- ◆ Amenities like coffee shops, restaurants, gift shops and vending machines were generally considered low priority, as they might compete with local establishments.

Table 10.2: Survey Respondents' Rankings of Passenger Rail Amenities

STATION AMENITIES AND SERVICE	High Priority	
	Public Meetings	On-line Survey
E-Ticket Kiosk	7	79
Parking (Short + Long Term)	6	78
Wireless Internet	6	63
Safe Pedestrian Access	6	103
Passenger Drop Off (Kiss and Ride)	6	75
Restrooms	5	75
Bicycle Racks	5	55
Bike Storage/Lockers	4	25
Online Ticket Service	3	
SmartPhone App for Tickets	3	
Info Desk (travel/tourism/recreation information)	3	23
Climate Controlled Indoor Seating	2	37
Feeling of safety and security at station	2	
Vending Machines	1	14
Coffee Shop (Local)	1	20
Gift Shop (Local Products)	1	2
Storage Lockers		8
Restaurant		3
Sound Attenuation		45

- ◆ Parking was identified as a critical element of a passenger rail station, as well as a feature that could prove challenging in terms of identifying location(s) for a passenger rail station. In one discussion group, participants recognized the ease of parking at a regional station like the Wassaic station on the Metro North line, but also expressed that such large, sprawling parking lots do not feel as safe or secure as stations in town centers or city neighborhoods.
- ◆ A tourist information desk was felt to be important, especially for people arriving in the Berkshires, but not necessarily a staffed information desk. This sparked a discussion about potential partnerships with regional entities: the informational desk or kiosk could be hosted by an organization such as the Berkshire Visitors Bureau or the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, with staff or volunteers working on weekends and during other peak periods.

Findings on Public Transportation Options

It is clear that multi-modal transportation options are important features to consider when locating and designing a passenger rail station in Berkshire County. At the public meetings and through the online survey, attendees/respondents were asked to identify and prioritize the transportation options they felt important to have at a passenger rail station. Table 10.3 displays the transportation options and the numbers in each column reflect the frequency which the transportation option was

Table 10.3: Preferred Public Transportation Options

Service	High Priority	
	Public Meetings	Online Surveys
Enhanced Bus Service	7	48
Shuttle Service	7	50
Taxi Service	6	35
Pedestrian Infrastructure	5	67
Car Rental	4	23
Bike Rental	3	32
Bike Shares	2	22
Zip cars	0	33

categorized as a high priority by the attendees/respondents.

- ◆ In the public meetings, the high priority transportation options identified were enhanced bus service, shuttle service and a taxi service.
- ◆ In the online survey responses, enhanced pedestrian infrastructure was the highest priority, followed by shuttle services to popular destinations, enhanced bus service (synching existing BRTA service with the passenger rail schedule) and taxicab service. Enhanced pedestrian connections are particularly important in downtown locations so passengers can safely travel from the passenger rail station into the downtown area.
- ◆ Shuttle service and taxi service were considered entrepreneurial opportunities for existing businesses in the region, and would also bene-



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fit local businesses, cultural and recreational destinations as people would have easy access from the passenger rail station to their destination.

Findings on Economic Development Benefits

At the public meetings and through the online survey, attendees/respondents were asked to identify how the region would benefit economically from the restoration of passenger rail service. An overwhelming majority of attendees/respondents felt that the region will benefit economically from the proposed passenger rail service.

- ◆ Nearly 94% of respondents to the survey indicated growth in tourism as the biggest economic development benefit followed by small business growth at 78.3% of respondents.
- ◆ Approximately 75% of respondents believe that the proposed passenger rail service will spur job growth
- ◆ Nearly 70% of respondents think the proposed passenger rail service will help attract employers to relocate to the Berkshires.
- ◆ 73% of respondents think the proposed passenger rail service will help attract and retain a skilled workforce in the region.

Findings on Housing Costs

At the public meetings and through the online survey, attendees/respondents were asked to identify how housing would be affected by the restoration of passenger rail service. The issue of housing affordability and housing opportunity for low to moderate income families in Berkshire County is an important issue that is recognized and addressed in Sustainable Berkshires (the regional plan for Berkshire County). Two of the rail corridor communities (Great Barrington and Sheffield) have recently completed housing studies that show limited workforce housing opportunities exist in these municipalities. Attendees/respondents had a mixed reaction to how housing might be impacted by the proposed passenger rail service.

- ◆ 54% of respondents think the proposed passenger rail service will result in increased housing values in the passenger rail station areas.
- ◆ 41% of respondents think the proposed passenger rail service will expand housing opportunities in the region.
- ◆ Nearly 40% of respondents think that the proposed passenger rail service will increase both the purchase and rental cost of residential units posing a challenge to the maintenance of housing affordability.
- ◆ At the public meetings, the

attendees recognized that the proposed passenger rail service may increase the demand for seasonal or second homes, potentially resulting in increased housing values and housing costs.

- ◆ Attendees/respondents expressed concern that homes or properties immediately adjacent to the rail corridor might decline in value due to the increased noise and train traffic.

Conclusion

Input from the attendees and respondents indicate strong support for the restoration of passenger rail service to Berkshire County. An overwhelming majority of those participating, in person or online, think the proposed passenger rail service will bring with it economic development benefits. In terms of passenger rail station design, amenities and services, the input from the participants indicates a desire for passenger rail stations that fit the community and regional context while offering modern services and amenities, such as electronic ticket kiosks, SmartPhone apps that enable paperless train travel and Wi-Fi in the passenger rail station and on the trains. Multi-modal transportation opportunities will enhance convenience for travelers while offering entrepreneurial opportunities for local business owners. The importance of the passenger rail station's ability to seamlessly move passengers from the train to the surrounding areas is critically important. The input from the participants

shows that passengers expect all the convenience of modern day life, Wi-Fi and electronic ticketing, at the pace of modern life (i.e. right now). In addition, the participants also indicated that the passenger rail stations should reflect the character of the communities and the region. Thus, the challenge in conceptualizing the design and layout of the passenger rail stations is how to layout and construct a passenger rail station that provides all the modern amenities while respecting the unique character and charm of the Berkshire Line communities.



11. CONSIDERATIONS FOR BERKSHIRE LINE COMMUNITIES

Considerations for the Proposed Passenger Rail Service and the Berkshire Line Communities

BRPC supports the development of the proposed passenger rail service because in our estimation the projected benefits to the region's economy and transportation system outweigh the recurring and localized impacts to small areas of the Berkshire Line communities. It is important to understand the development of the passenger rail service will not happen overnight. HRRC estimates that it will take approximately three (3) years from the beginning of construction on the rail infrastructure to the time that a passenger train will operate for the first time to Berkshire County. It is realistic to assume that the process of obtaining funds for the rail infrastructure improvements in both Connecticut and Massachusetts could take several years. This period of time presents an excellent opportunity for the Berkshire Line communities to begin planning for the proposed passenger rail service.

BRPC views the proposed passenger rail stations as community assets that have the potential to help spur economic development, redevelopment and growth in the downtown areas. The station area plans provided in this report are intended as a starting point for those planning efforts. In the end, the amount of benefits that the proposed passenger rail service will provide depends less on the service itself and what the communities, residents and businesses in Berkshire County make of it. The following considerations are intended to help guide the future planning efforts for the proposed service.

Next Steps for the Development of the Proposed Passenger Rail Service

- ◆ MassDOT is encouraged to make the necessary improvements and upgrades to the rail infrastructure necessary for a passenger rail service to operate
- ◆ HRRC and the State of Connecticut are encouraged to continue collaborating on obtaining funds for the necessary improvements and upgrades to the rail infrastructure necessary for a passenger rail service in Connecticut.
- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to construct the passenger rail stations in the locations recommended in this report or make the funding available for such construction.
- ◆ BRPC is encouraged to facilitate a discussion between the BRTA, MassDOT, 1Berkshire (Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitors Bureau) and the municipalities recommended for initial passenger rail stations to determine potential station ownership scenarios and to identify what partnerships may need to be developed.
- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to work with the BRTA and other providers of transportation to ensure that transportation is available at the passenger rail stations when passengers arrive.
- ◆ HRRC and MassDOT are encouraged to proactively address potential noise and vibration impacts during the reconstruction of the rail infrastructure.
- ◆ HRRC is encouraged to pursue the acquisition of the rolling stock (locomotives, passenger cars, etc.) necessary to operate the passenger

rail service, and to continue to develop and market its service and begin operations.

- ◆ BRPC is encouraged to work cooperatively with its counterpart in northwest Connecticut (Northwest Hills Council of Governments) to finalize the location of a joint facility to serve Sheffield and North Canaan, CT.
- ◆ The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is encouraged to make funding available for the Berkshire Line communities that are recommended for passenger rail stations so the communities can engage in a detailed planning process to maximize the benefits of the proposed passenger rail service and minimize its impacts.

Considerations for Berkshire Line Communities

- ◆ All of the Berkshire Line communities are encouraged to stay involved in the development of the proposed passenger rail service and to communicate concerns, if any, to MassDOT or HRRC.
- ◆ Each of the Berkshire Line communities may wish to consider establishing a "quiet zone" in their community if it is determined that the locomotive horn noise will create considerable noise impacts.
- ◆ In other localities where passenger rail services have been introduced, public authorities, rail carriers, federal and state safety officials and citizens have worked together with an organization called Operation Lifesaver to develop awareness and safety programs along the rail lines. During the time when construction is taking place to upgrade the tracks and construct stations, it is recommended that a

similar program be instituted along the rail line in the Berkshires.

The following general recommendations pertain to the four (4) Berkshire Line communities recommended to host initial passenger rail stations. Specific recommendations can be found in the Station Area Plans for the recommended passenger rail stations:

- ◆ Play an active role in the siting and construction of the passenger rail station. In particular, consider engaging the entity responsible for the design and construction of the proposed passenger rail station to ensure the design is compatible with the community.
- ◆ Consider that a passenger rail station could be integrated into a mixed-use building instead of a standalone traditional platform and shelter. The mixed-use building could provide additional revenue to the station owner from lease payments.
- ◆ Consider and plan for how the proposed passenger rail station can be an asset and gathering point for the community.
- ◆ Understand the capacity and condition of any public parking infrastructure and the proposed passenger rail stations impact on the parking. Develop a parking strategy to ensure that long term parking and short term parking are available in the passenger rail station area.
- ◆ Plan for additional mixed-use development around the proposed station area through amendments to the land use regulations to encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD), the adaptive reuse of existing build-



11. CONSIDERATIONS FOR BERKSHIRE LINE COMMUNITIES

ings and infill development.

- ◆ Understand the condition and capacity of utility infrastructure (sewer/water/gas/electricity) to support additional development around the proposed passenger rail station locations where appropriate (TOD).
- ◆ Consider pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and ensure the surrounding area provides safe access to the proposed station for pedestrians and cyclists. Consider installing wayfinding signs to direct pedestrians from the passenger rail station to the downtown establishments
- ◆ Consider circulation patterns and traffic flow to ensure the surrounding areas do not become congested with traffic.



12. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Local Needs Analyses





12. APPENDIX

Local Needs Analysis - City of Pittsfield	Target Areas			
	Downtown Pittsfield	West Housatonic Street to West Street	South Street to West Housatonic Street	Holmes Road
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?				
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	This area has a high number of employers in close proximity (e.g. Berkshire Health Systems, Berkshire Bank).	This area has a number of employers in close proximity (e.g. Berkshire Eagle, Big Y).	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.
Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?	Close to commercial business and retail in the downtown area.	Close to a smaller number of commercial businesses and retail.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	Close to places of accommodation (e.g. Crowne Plaza) and food establishments (~ 20-30) in the downtown-North Street area.	Not close to places of accommodations. Several food establishments are located along West Housatonic Street.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Close to cultural attractions (e.g. Colonial Theatre, Berkshire Museum, Barrington Stage Company).	Not close to cultural or recreational attractions.	Not close to cultural or recreational attractions.	Close to cultural attraction: Herman Melville's Arrowhead
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?				
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	Area is densely populated with 5 people or more per acre.	Population density of the area is predominately 2 to 5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with between 1 to 5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with most areas having a density of less than 0.5 people per acre.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	The downtown area is served by Routes 7, 9 and 20.	This area is served by Route 20.	This area is served by Route 20 on the northern end of the area and Route 7 on the southern end of the area.	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	The BRTA transit hub at the Intermodal Center is located in this area.	BRTA Route 15 bus serves this area.	BRTA Route 2 bus serves this area at the extreme southern end of the area along Route 7.	No BRTA bus service.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	Sidewalks exist in the downtown area with marked bike lanes on North Street.	Sidewalks exist along West Housatonic Street and West Street.	Sidewalks exist only along West Housatonic Street and South Street and nowhere else in the area.	Few or no sidewalks are present.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	Yes, the area is located in the downtown area with commercial and residential uses in close proximity.	Although not ideal, this area could facilitate intra-county transportation. This area is located approximately four tenths of a mile from the North Street downtown area.	No. The area is located too far from dense residential and commercial areas.	No. The area is located too far from dense residential and commercial areas.
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?				
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? <i>(2009 – Pittsfield Master Plan, 2004 – Pittsfield Community Development Plan).</i>	Supporting growth and revitalization in the downtown area is supported by community planning documents.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents as it would encourage growth outside the downtown area.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents as it would encourage growth outside the downtown area.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents as it would encourage growth outside the downtown area.



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Local Needs Analysis - City of Pittsfield	Target Areas			
	Downtown Pittsfield	West Housatonic Street to West Street	South Street to West Housatonic Street	Holmes Road
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?				
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial and residential.	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial, industrial and residential.	Existing land uses are mostly undeveloped with some residential uses.	Existing land uses are residential.
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?				
Overall Response to Question	PARTIAL (0.5)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.
Overall Scoring				
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points				
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5				
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	EXCELLENT (4.5)	GOOD (3)	POOR (0)	POOR (0)



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Lenox	Target Areas		
	Crystal Street	Willow Creek Road	New Lenox Road
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?			
Overall Response to Question	PARTIAL (0.5)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	A few employers in this area.	A few employers located in this area	Not in close proximity to places of employment.
Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?	Not close to commercial businesses or retail except for a small portion of the area on the southern end near Lenox Dale.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail establishments.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments except for two small food establishments in the area near Lenox Dale.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	The Berkshire Scenic Railway museum is located in this area and there is trail access to October Mountain State Park.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?			
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	Population density varies in this area with portions of 0.5 to 1 person per acre to 2-5 people per acre around Lenox Dale.	Population density is less than 0.5 people per acre.	Population density is 2 to 5 people per acre for this area.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	BRTA Route 2 bus serves this area and makes a stop in Lenox Dale.	BRTA Route 2 bus serves the southern end of this area.	No BRTA bus service.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	Sidewalks present along one or both sides of Crystal Street to Lenox Dale.	Few or no sidewalks present.	Few or no sidewalks present.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas and Lenox Dale is not currently a destination for residents or visitors.	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas.	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas.
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?			
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? (1999 – Lenox Master Plan, 2004 – Lenox Community Development Plan).	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is supported by community planning documents that seek to promote the use of the villages as true mixed-use centers.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents that seek to promote the use of the villages as true mixed use centers.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents that seek to promote the use of the villages as true mixed use centers.
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?			
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	YES (1)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are mixed residential, commercial and industrial.	Existing land uses are a mix of industrial and residential uses with the existing historic Lenox station located in this area.	Existing land uses are residential and protected open space.



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Lenox	Target Areas		
	Crystal Street	Willow Creek Road	New Lenox Road
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?			
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.	Portions of this area are within the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, NHESP Priority Conservation Area and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, NHESP Priority Conservation Area and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.
Overall Scoring			
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points			
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5			
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	FAIR (2.5)	POOR (1.5)	POOR (0)



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Lee	Target Areas					
	Greylock Street to Lenox Line	Columbia Street	Downtown Lee	Turnpike to West Park Street	Pleasant Street (Route 102) to Turnpike	Route 102
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?						
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	This area has the high number of employers (e.g. Price Chopper).	Not in close proximity to places of employment, except for the northern end of the area along West Park Street.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	This area has a number of employers (e.g. Country Curtains, Boyd Converting).
Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?	Not close to commercial businesses or retail. Area is far from the downtown area.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail. Area is north of the downtown area. The Columbia Mill in the area could be redeveloped as a commercial space.	Close to commercial businesses and retail in the downtown area. This area has the greatest concentration of retail and commercial in the town.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail except for the northern end of the area along West Park Street.	This area is mostly undeveloped. There are no commercial or retail uses within the area.	This area has a small number of commercial/retail uses along Route 102 although they are spread out throughout the area.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Close to places of accommodation and food establishments. This area has the highest number of food establishments (~20) and places of accommodation in the town.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments, except for the northern end of the area along West Park Street.	This target area is mostly undeveloped, with no places of accommodation or food establishments.	This area has a small number of places of accommodation (~5) and food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	The western end of this area is close to the Berkshire Theatre Group.
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?						
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	Area is not densely populated with a mix of densities ranging from less than 0.5 people per acre to 2-5 people per acre.	This area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre, except for a small area of 0.5 to 1 people per acre.	This area is the most densely populated in the town with areas of 2-5 people per acre and 5 or more people per acre.	Population density varies in the area with most areas being 1-2 people per acre with 2-5 people per acre closer to West Park Street.	This area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre.	This area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre, except in South Lee where the density increases to 0.5 to 1 people per acre.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.	This area is not served by a state numbered highway.	This target area is served by Route 20.	This area is not served by a state numbered highway although Route 20 passes close by the northern portion of this area.	This area is served by Route 102 along the southern portion of this area.	This target area is served by Route 102.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	BRTA Route 2 bus serves this area on Mill Street.	BRTA Route 2 bus serves this area at the southern end on Center Street.	BRTA Route 2 bus serves this area.	No BRTA bus service	BRTA Route 21 bus serves this area at the southern end on Route 102.	BRTA Route 21 bus serves this area.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	Few sidewalks present in this area.	Sidewalks present along Columbia Street that connect to the downtown area.	Sidewalks present throughout the downtown area.	Few sidewalks present in this area, mostly in the northern portion near West Park Street.	No sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area. Bicycle accommodations along Route 102 are being designed as part of the Lee Bike Path Project.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas.	Although not ideal this area could facilitate intra-county transportation. This area is located six tenths of a mile from the downtown area with good pedestrian connections.	Yes, this area is located in the downtown area.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?						

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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Lee	Target Areas					
	Greylock Street to Lenox Line	Columbia Street	Downtown Lee	Turnpike to West Park Street	Pleasant Street (Route 102) to Turnpike	Route 102
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? <i>(2000 – Lee Master Plan, 2004 – Lee Community Development Plan).</i>	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of downtown area or mills.	Encouraging the reuse of the Columbia Mill is supported by community planning documents.	Supporting growth and revitalization in the downtown area is supported by community planning documents.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of downtown area or mills.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of downtown area or mills.	Although not ideal, the use of this area as a passenger rail station is supported by community planning documents calling for the revitalization of the Route 102 corridor.
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?						
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are residential.	A passenger rail station could be compatible with redevelopment of the Columbia Mill complex.	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial and residential.	Existing land use is mostly industrial except for a residential portion of the area near West Park Street that would not be compatible.	Existing land use is mostly undeveloped and industrial.	Existing land use is a mix of commercial and industrial uses.
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?						
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.	Portions of this area are within a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species, and/or NHESP Priority Conservation Area.
Overall Scoring						
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points						
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5						
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	POOR (0)	FAIR (2.5)	EXCELLENT (4)	POOR (0.5)	POOR (0.5)	FAIR (2.5)



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Stockbridge	Target Areas			
	Cherry Street to South Street	South Street to East Main Street	Glendale	Glendale Middle Road
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?				
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Large employers in this area (e.g. Red Lion Inn, Austin Riggs).	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.
Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?	Not close to commercial businesses except for a small portion of the area on the eastern end along South Street.	Close to commercial businesses in the downtown area.	Not close to commercial businesses. Area is far from town center; outside of walking distance.	Not close to commercial businesses. Area is far from town center; outside of walking distance.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments except for a small portion of the area on the extreme eastern end along South Street.	Close to places of accommodations and food establishments in the downtown area.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodations or food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Fairly close to cultural attractions near the downtown area (e.g. Naumkeag, National Shrine of Divine Mercy).	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Close to cultural attractions (e.g. Norman Rockwell Museum, Chesterwood).
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?				
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	Area is not densely populated; less than 0.5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated; less than 0.5 people per acre.	Area varies in population density, ranging from less than 0.5 people per acre to 0.5 to 1 people per acre to 2-5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated; population density ranges from less than 0.5 people per acre to 0.5-1 people per acre.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	South Street (Route 7) passes along the eastern end of the area.	The area is served by Route 7 (South Street).	The area is served by Route 183 (Glendale Road).	The area is not directly served by a state numbered highway although Glendale Middle Road connects Route 183 and Route 102.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	No BRTA bus service.	BRTA Route 21 bus serves the downtown area north of this area	BRTA Route 21 bus serves this area.	No BRTA bus service.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	No sidewalks present in this area.	Sidewalks exist along Route 7 north of Park Street.	No sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas.	Yes. The area is located approximately three-tenths of a mile from the downtown area.	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas.	No. The area is located too far from residential or commercial areas.
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?				
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? (1996 – Stockbridge Master Plan, 2004 – Stockbridge Community Development Plan).	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents because it would alter the character of the area and the existing land use patterns.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is supported by community planning documents as the existing historic train station is part of the character and existing land use pattern in the town. One objective of the Master Plan is to “restore passenger train service to Stockbridge.”	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents because it would alter the character of the area and the existing land use patterns.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents because it would alter the character of the area and the existing land use patterns.



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Stockbridge	Target Areas			
	Cherry Street to South Street	South Street to East Main Street	Glendale	Glendale Middle Road
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?				
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are residential and undeveloped.	Existing land uses in the area are a mix of commercial and residential use.	Existing land uses are residential.	Existing land uses are residential.
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?				
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	A small portion of this area is within a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer.
Overall Scoring				
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points				
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5				
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	POOR (0)	EXCELLENT (4)	POOR (0.5)	POOR (0.5)



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Great Barrington	Target Areas					
	Housatonic	Van Deusenville	North Plain Road: South of Division Street	North Plain Road: Pearl, Welcome, George	Downtown Great Barrington	South Main Street
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?						
Overall Response to Question	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	A fair number of employers in this area.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	This area has a number of employers. (e.g. Fairview Hospital, Big Y, Kindred Healthcare, Iredale Mineral Cosmetics).	Not in close proximity to places of employment.
Is the TA located in close proximity to existing clusters of retail and commercial businesses?	This area has a small number of commercial/retail uses.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.	Close to commercial businesses and retail in the downtown area. The downtown area has the highest number of retail and commercial uses in the town.	Only scattered low density commercial businesses and retail.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	This area has a small number of food establishments (~3).	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Close to food establishments and a small number of places of accommodations. The downtown area has the highest number of food establishments in the town.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Close to cultural attraction: Mahaiwe Theatre.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?						
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	This area has a mix of population densities ranging from 0.5 to 1 people per acre up to greater than 5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with 0.5 to 1 people per acre.	Area is the most densely populated in the town with areas of greater than 5 people per acre and other areas with 2 to 5 people per acre and 1 to 2 people per acre.	Area is not densely populated with less than 0.5 people per acre.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	This area is served by Route 183.	This area is served by Route 41 at the southern end of the area.	This area is served by Route 41.	This area is served by Route 41.	This area is served by Routes 7 and 41.	This area is served by Route 7.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	BRTA Route 21 bus serves this area.	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.	BRTA Route 21 bus serves this area.	No BRTA bus service.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	Sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area.	Few sidewalks present in this area along North Plain Road.	Sidewalks present throughout the downtown area.	No sidewalks present in this area.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	Although not ideal this area could facilitate intra-county transportation in the future once the Housatonic Village area is revitalized.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has limited pedestrian connections.	Yes, this area is located in the downtown area.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Great Barrington	Target Areas					
	Housatonic	Van Deusenville	North Plain Road: South of Division Street	North Plain Road: Pearl, Welcome, George	Downtown Great Barrington	South Main Street
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?						
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? <i>(2012-2103 – Great Barrington Master Plan, 2004 – Great Barrington Community Development Plan).</i>	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage the revitalization of Housatonic Village.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the downtown area or Housatonic Village.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the downtown area or Housatonic Village.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the downtown area or Housatonic Village.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth in the downtown area.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the downtown area or Housatonic Village.
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?						
Overall Response to Question	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial, residential and industrial uses.	Existing land uses are residential.	Existing land uses are mostly residential.	Existing land uses are residential.	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial, residential and industrial uses.	Existing land uses are low density commercial.
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?						
Overall Response to Question	PARTIAL (0.5)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)	PARTIAL (0.5)	NO (0)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.
Overall Scoring						
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points						
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5						
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	EXCELLENT (4)	POOR (0.5)	POOR (0)	POOR (0.5)	EXCELLENT (4.5)	POOR (0)



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Sheffield	Target Areas				
	Town Line to Sheffield-Egremont Road	Cook Road	Sheffield Center	Rannapo Road / Ashley Falls Road	West Stahl Road to Connecticut
1. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize the economic impact to the community by supporting existing businesses and downtown areas?					
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to areas of employment?	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	This area has a small number of employers.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.	Not in close proximity to places of employment.
Is the TA located in close proximity to clusters of existing retail and commercial businesses?	A small number of commercial businesses and retail exist just south of the Great Barrington town line.	A small number of commercial businesses and retail are present.	Close to commercial businesses and retail in the town center.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.	Not close to commercial businesses or retail.
Is the TA located in close proximity to places of accommodation and food establishments?	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Close to places of accommodation (~4) and food establishments (~3).	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.	Not close to places of accommodation or food establishments.
Is the TA located in close proximity to cultural and recreational opportunities?	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.	Not close to cultural or recreational opportunities.
2. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station maximize access and connectivity to and from the community?					
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the TA located in close proximity to a densely populated area of the community?	Population density is low with less than 0.5 people per acre.	Population density is 2 to 5 people per acre.	Population density in this area is greater than 5 people per acre along Route 7 with less as one moves away from the town center.	Population density is low with less than 0.5 people per acre.	Population density is low with between 0.5 to 1 people per acre.
Is the TA served by a state numbered highway or is it located in close proximity to a state numbered highway?	This area is served by Route 7.	This area is served by Route 7.	This area is served by Route 7.	This area is served by Route 7A.	This area is served by Routes 7 and 7A.
Is the TA currently served by or located along an existing public transportation route?	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.	No BRTA bus service.
Does the TA have safe pedestrian and cycling access to the surrounding areas?	No sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area.	Few sidewalks present throughout the downtown area.	No sidewalks present in this area.	No sidewalks present in this area.
Does the use of the TA as a passenger rail station facilitate the use of the proposed passenger rail service for intra-county transportation by residents and visitors?	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas.	Yes, this area is located in the town center.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.	No, the area is located too far from residential and commercial areas and has no pedestrian connections.



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Local Needs Analysis - Town of Sheffield	Target Areas				
	Town Line to Sheffield-Egremont Road	Cook Road	Sheffield Center	Rannapo Road / Ashley Falls Road	West Stahl Road to Connecticut
3. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station complement community planning efforts?					
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	PARTIAL (0.5)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station supported by the goals and objectives or other aspects of existing community planning documents? <i>(2005 – Sheffield Master Plan, 2004 – Sheffield Community Development Plan).</i>	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the town center and Ashley Falls.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the town center and Ashley Falls.	Supporting economic development in the town center is supported by community planning documents.	The use of this area as a passenger rail station is not supported by community planning documents, as it would encourage growth outside of the town center and Ashley Falls.	Supporting the mixed use development in Ashley Falls is supported by the community planning documents. Locations outside of Ashley Falls would not be supported by the community planning documents.
4. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station fit with the character of the community?					
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	YES (1)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Is the use of the TA as a passenger rail station compatible with the surrounding existing land uses?	Existing land uses are predominately low density commercial with residential and agricultural.	Existing land uses are predominately low density residential and agricultural with a small amount of commercial.	Existing land uses are a mix of commercial and residential.	Existing land use is mostly residential and agricultural.	Existing land use is mostly residential and agricultural.
5. Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?					
Overall Response to Question	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)	NO (0)
Will the use of the TA as a passenger rail station avoid adverse environmental impacts?	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within the Schenob Brook ACEC, a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.	Portions of this area are within a FEMA 100 Year Floodplain, Riverfront Protection Area/Wetland Buffer, and/or Habitat of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern Species.
Overall Scoring					
Scoring: Yes = 1 point, Partial = 0.5 points No = 0 points					
Excellent = 4-5; Good = 3-3.5; Fair = 2-2.5; Poor = 0-1.5					
Overall Conformance with Local Needs	POOR (0)	POOR (0)	EXCELLENT (4)	POOR (0)	POOR (0.5)



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Appendix B: Passenger Rail Station Location Study Survey

1. Where do you live?

2. If you like, you can provide your e-mail address to stay up to date about project progress.

3. Please identify how important you find the following station amenities or services to be by indicating whether they are of low, medium or high priority.

Answer Options:

- Sound Attenuation (to mitigate noise for surrounding homes or businesses)
- Electronic ticket kiosk
- Restrooms
- Storage lockers
- Long term parking
- Climate controlled indoor seating
- Information desk (travel/tourism/recreation information)
- Restaurant
- Coffee shop
- Vending machines
- Gift shop/other retail
- Wireless internet hot spot
- Passenger drop-off and pick-up ('Kiss and Ride')
- Safe pedestrian access
- Bicycle racks
- Bicycle storage/lockers
- Other (please specify)

4. Please consider how important you find the following transportation options to be by ranking low, medium or high priority.

Answer Options:

- Enhanced bus service
- Taxi cabs
- Car rental
- Zip cars
- Bike shares
- Bike rental
- Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, walking paths, wayfinding)
- Shuttle services to popular destinations
- Other (please specify)

5. To which locations would you travel?

Answer Options:

- Within Berkshire County
- Connecticut
- New York City
- Other (please specify)

5. How often would you travel to these locations per month (one way trips)?

Answer Options:

- 1-6
- 7-12
- 13-18
- 19 or More
- Other (please specify)

6. What would the purpose of these trips most likely be?

Answer Options:

- Work
- Tourism/Recreation
- Visit family/friends
- Medical appointments
- Other (please specify)

7. How do you envision your community or region maximizing economic development benefits from the restoration of passenger rail service?

Answer Options:

- Job growth
- Job retention
- Increased ability to attract/retain skilled workforce
- Decreased ability to attract/retain skilled workforce
- Increased investment
- Employers relocating to Berkshire county
- Small business growth
- Business expansion
- Growth in tourism
- Compliment ongoing economic development initiatives
- Increased transportation access to and within Berkshire county
- No impact
- Other (please specify)

8. How will the restoration of passenger rail service impact housing in your community and the region?

Answer Options:

- Increase cost of housing (rental or purchase)
- Decrease cost of housing (rental or purchase)
- Expand housing opportunity
- Make it easier to buy a house
- Make it more difficult to buy a house
- Help link economic development opportunity with housing opportunity
- Increase housing values near station area
- Decrease housing values near station area
- Decrease housing values along rail line
- No impact
- Other (please specify)

9. In general, are you supportive of the return of passenger rail to the Berkshire region?

Answer Options:

- Yes
- No



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Appendix C: Media List

August 2013 -- "Restoring Passenger Rail Service to the Berkshires". Brian Domina, Berkshire Trade & Commerce.

January 30, 2014 -- "Our Opinion: Keep pushing trains". Berkshire Eagle.

March 11, 2014 -- "Senate approves \$15 million in transportation funding for Berkshires". Nathan Mayberg, Berkshire Eagle.

May 13, 2014 -- "BRPC Suggests Intermodal Center Be Fitted For Housatonic Rail". Andy McKeever, iBerkshires.com.

May 14, 2014 -- "Council hears update on stations for proposed rail link to Metro North". Jim Therrien, Berkshire Eagle.

July 11, 2014 -- "Housatonic Railroad Optimistic About Regional Passenger Line". Joe Durwin, iBerkshires.com.

July 17, 2014 -- "MassDOT purchases Berkshire Rail for \$12.13 million". Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle.

July 18, 2014 -- "State to buy Berkshire rail line; first step in restoring passenger service". David Scribner, The Berkshire Edge.

July 22, 2014 -- "Berkshire railroad study sees four communities as best depot sites". Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle.

July 25, 2014 -- "Our Opinion: Long way to Grand Central Station". Berkshire Eagle.

July 25, 2014 -- "Berkshire Passenger Rail Needs Major Improvements Before Launch". Evan Basha, NEPR.

July 25, 2014 -- "State to move ahead with funding for rail commuter service to NYC". David Scribner, The Berkshire Edge.

July 26, 2014 -- "Connecticut seeking upgraded freight rail line". Stephen Singer, Hartford Courant.

August 10, 2014 -- "Berkshire County train depots touted for NYC run". Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle.

August 11, 2014 -- "'The Train Campaign' Heads to the Northwest Corner: Advocates of passenger rail service between the Berkshires, Danbury and Manhattan turn attention to Connecticut". Don Stacom, The Hartford Courant.

August 18, 2014 -- "Berkshire Train Campaign Chugs to North County". Stephen Dravis, iBerkshires.com.

September 2014 -- "Sounding Board - Return of rail service within reach: Support grows for this vital aspect of our 21st century transportation infrastructure". Karen Christensen, Berkshire Trade & Commerce.

September 2014 -- "Just the Facts: Berkshires rail service still not a winner". Sandy Johnston, The Berkshire View.

September 19, 2014 -- "Berkshire Regional Planning Commission IDs four possible station sites for Berkshire Line". Phil Demers, Berkshire Eagle.

September 22, 2014 -- "Residents Hear Final Presentation From Berkshire Regional Planning Commission". Jim Vasil, Time Warner Cable News.

September 23, 2014 -- "Lee Residents Weigh In on Possible Passenger Rail Travel to NYC". Jim Vasil, Time Warner Cable News.

September 24, 2014 -- "Lee Highway garage seen as 'strongest candidate' for rail depot". Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle.

September 26, 2014 -- "Letter: Make use of historic train stations". T. H. Sewall, Berkshire Eagle.

**Note: List is not exhaustive.*



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Appendix D: Public Comments Received

From: Tom Sexton <tom@railstotrails.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2014 2:13 PM
To: Brian Domina
Subject: Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Project

Re: Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Comments on the Reactivation of the Housatonic Passenger Line

Mr. Domina,

The potential for reactivation of the Housatonic Passenger Line in Connecticut and Massachusetts is very good news. As part of the launching of the Western New England Greenway, I bicycled this corridor with the coalition in the summer of 2013 and again was excited about its reuse possibilities.

In keeping with the national trend toward combining several different uses in one right-of-way, RTC hopes the new line can be designed to include rail-with-trail where possible. As you know in Massachusetts much of the line paralleled the old Berkshire Street Railway Company which went out of business in 1932. Hopefully this fact means at some areas sufficient width is available for co-use. If not in may be prudent to study the feasibility of acquiring adjacent property.

In addition, we hope sufficient planning is put in place that assures that existing and newly constructed bridges have sufficient width for a trail.

To further this discussion, I would be happy to present our recently completed national rail-with-trail study at any forums you might suggest.

Tom

Tom Sexton, Director
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Northeast Regional Office
2133 Market Street
Camp Hill, Pa. 17011
717-238-1717
717-238-7566 fax
tom@railstotrails.org
www.railstotrails.org

From: Chris Rembold [mailto:crembold@Townofgb.org]
Sent: Monday, September 08, 2014 1:23 PM
To: Brian Domina
Cc: Gwen Miller
Subject: train station study comments

Hi Brian and Gwen, I only read the summary and the items dealing with GB. Overall, it is a good and thorough report. I am following up with Planning Board about their 9/25 meeting.

Here are a few small comments. I might have other comments.

p.15 summary, you might want to include either in the table or in the text, that the historic GB station and adjacent land is in private ownership. It may or may be available for railroad station development if and when the railroad becomes a reality. There is always the possibility the Owner sells it to someone else, or does not want to entertain the station idea. I don't know if the study wants to go so far as recommend Mass DOT or some other entity lock up the property, or not.

p. 16 exiting conditions, left hand column, at bottom: the ownership is now Mass DOT, not HRR.

p. 51, existing conditions: does the fact that there is double track at the historic GB station deserve a mention?

p. 70, station area plans: second column, first full sentence: "rough road parallel to..." Not sure what this refers to, but it does not seem like a viable option.

Same page, same column, first full paragraph: the town's traffic studies in advance of our Main St project counted in 2009 about 19,600 average daily traffic on Rte 7. Your count seems very low.

p. 71, third column: A Business Improvement District has not been formed, but one may be considered.

Same page, same column, last sentence, revise to read as follows: "The community is also reviewing whether special zoning districts, such as Chapter 40R that increases allowable density in order to accommodate housing development near transit, would be desirable."

p. 72, item 9 in last column: change to "a" Business Improvement District instead of "the" Business Improvement District.

Best,
Chris

Christopher T. Rembold, AICP
Town Planner
Town of Great Barrington
334 Main Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230
Ph: (413) 528-1619, x. 7
www.townofgb.org



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**Town of Sheffield
Board of Selectmen**
Town Hall – 21 Depot Square
P.O. Box 325
Sheffield, Massachusetts 01257

Voice: 413-229-7000
Fax: 413-229-7010
TTY: 800-439-2370

Ms. Gwen Miller, Planner
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

March 17, 2014

RE: Passenger rail station location and design analysis study

Dear Ms. Miller:

We appreciate your providing Sheffield residents and Town officials the opportunity to receive two presentations on the important topic of the passenger rail project and the possible location of stations. The purpose of this letter is to provide the Town's feedback, based on public comments made at these presentations.

It is important to recognize that you were presenting but one aspect of the passenger rail station project – potential station location. In your comments you discussed the possibility of 2 – 3 stations from the CT line to Pittsfield as well as the concept of local and regional stations.

Unfortunately many of the questions attendees raised were outside the scope of this current study and could not be answered. Such questions sought information on train speeds, frequency, schedule, community impacts as well as likely increases in freight transit. Other comments questioned the validity of the passenger rail study's data, the legitimacy of this project when so many infrastructure needs are unmet in Berkshire County and the wisdom/ethics of using public money to support a private business. Attendees were at times frustrated as they sought to evaluate this project from a holistic perspective, not just the single aspect being presented.

I have attached minutes from both Board of Selectmen meetings where this topic was discussed.

To summarize, public input was skeptical of the value of this entire project due to questions regarding the validity of the data used to justify the project and non-support of public funds being used to the benefit a private business. There were serious concerns raised as to the impacts of passenger rail on community values, including increased suburbanization, housing prices, affordable housing stock, and the lives of those with property or homes near the railroad tracks, as well as how such impacts would be mitigated and such mitigation financed. There was no enthusiasm for a station stop in Sheffield. If a station were to be located in Sheffield, Sheffield Center is the preferred location, as this location would have the impact of slowing trains down as they traveled through the Town and benefitting local businesses. For a regional station, the location closest to the Sheffield/Great Barrington Town line was selected. It was felt much more information needs to be provided on this project.

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Following the public hearings, two citizens called to voice their belief in the value of public transportation and railroads in particular. While they were not familiar with the details of the Housatonic Rail Road project, they felt passenger rail service would be beneficial, including upgrading the Amtrack service from Pittsfield to Boston.

The Town of Sheffield looks forward to continuing this conversation and getting more particulars on the entirety of the passenger rail study. Our citizens are interested and engaged in this topic. Please let the Board of Selectmen know when additional information is available.

Sincerely,


Julie M. Hannum, Chairman

Attachments: 2

cc: The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor
The Honorable Benjamin B. Downing, State Senator
The Honorable Therese Murray, President of the Senate
The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker of the House
The Honorable William "Smitty" Pignatelli, State Representative, 4th Berkshire District
The Honorable Gailanne M. Cariddi, State Representative, 1st Berkshire District
The Honorable Paul W. Mark, State Representative, 2nd Berkshire District
The Honorable Tricia Farley-Bouvier, State Representative, 3rd Berkshire District



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Town of Sheffield
Board of Selectmen
Town Hall – 21 Depot Square
P.O. Box 325
Sheffield, Massachusetts 01257

Voice: 413-229-7000
Fax: 413-229-7010
TTY: 800-439-2370

September 11, 2014

Brian Domina, Esq.
Project Manager
BRPC
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Re: Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Project

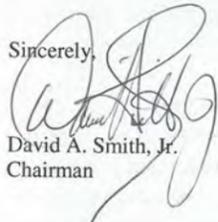
The Town of Sheffield Board of Selectmen appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Passenger Rail Station Location and Design Project study. Overall the draft document is in line with information presented by Gwen Miller at two informational meetings in Sheffield.

Sheffield understands the important opportunities provided by increased rail usage, whether it is passenger service, as detailed in this study, or increased freight traffic serving Berkshire businesses. There continues to be skepticism of the validity of the consultant's passenger counts and the expense the state has committed to this project; some citizens wish similar energy and expense were devoted to improving Amtrak service from Pittsfield to Boston and return. Several citizens have expressed their outright support for rail transport as a fuel efficient alternative to cars. However, as we conveyed in an earlier letter from this Board, there are concerns surrounding increased rail traffic.

While the majority of these concerns are outside the scope of this study, they do need to be answered prior to the implementation of increased rail usage. These concerns focus on train speeds, schedules, vibrations, and the impacts of increased rail usage on community values, including but not limited to, increased suburbanization, housing prices, affordable housing stock, and the lives of those with property near the railroad tracks, as well as how such impacts would be mitigated and such mitigation financed.

Please let the Board of Selectmen know when additional information is available.

Sincerely,


David A. Smith, Jr.
Chairman

This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

From: kevin.wright@dot.gov [mailto:kevin.wright@dot.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 1:35 PM
To: Brian Domina
Subject: Passenger Rail Study - FHWA Comments

Brian,

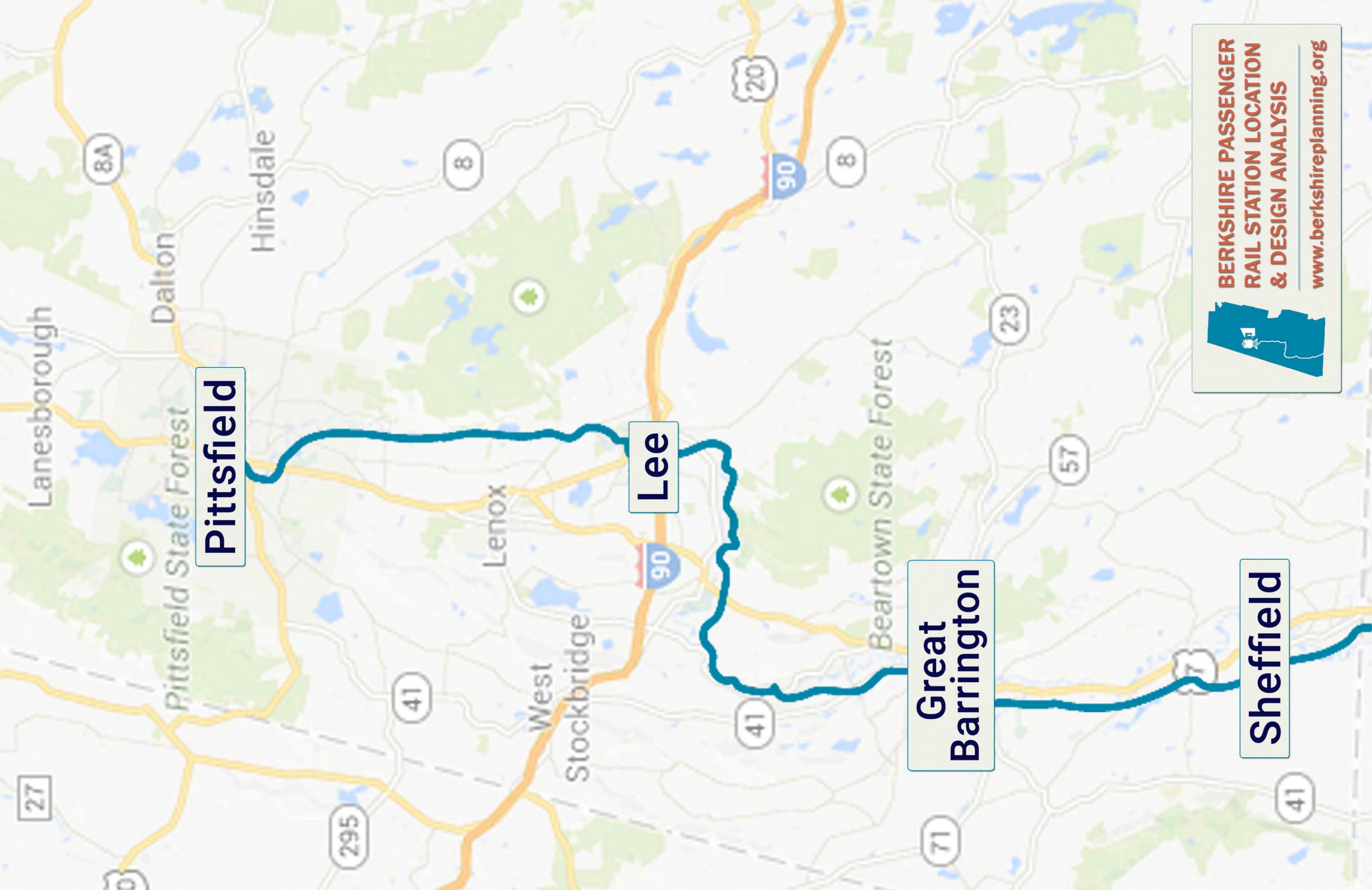
I had one comment on the Passenger Rail Study. I apologize for it being late.

In Section 6 (Passenger Rail Station Sketch Plans and Ownership Considerations), there page reference for the Conceptual Site Plans for each station location. They all appear to reference the wrong page based on the page numbers shown in the bottom right corner of each page. For example, the reference for the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center says that the Site Plan is on page 45 but based on the way the pages are numbered it actually occurs on page 61.

Thanks,

Kevin

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