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# the berkshire flyer 2.0

A Pilot Seasonal Rail Service between  
New York City and The Berkshires

# **Berkshire Flyer 2.0:**

## **A Pilot Seasonal Rail Service between New York City and The Berkshires**

### **Developed By:**

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
1Berkshire

### **In support of:**

The Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee

### **Study Support Provided by:**

MassDOT  
Amtrak

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# 1. Introduction and Background

This study is a continuation of efforts to implement a Pilot for Seasonal Rail Service between New York City and Pittsfield. State Senator Adam Hinds secured \$100,000 in the FY19 state budget to continue moving forward the Berkshire Flyer planning process. The Outside Section authorizes the establishment of a Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Transportation Subcommittee to be co-chaired by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and 1Berkshire. The subcommittee will expand the members of the initial Berkshire Flyer working group to include at least 3 designees from the hospitality industry; an elected municipal official from southern and northern Berkshire County; and existing rail service stakeholders, as deemed necessary by the co-chairs. Specifically, the legislation reads:

*Final FY 19 Budget SECTION 101. There shall be a transportation subcommittee convened in the working group convened pursuant to section 137 of chapter 47 of the acts of 2017 to identify and evaluate the issues, benefits and challenges of creating a seasonal rail service between New York City and the county of Berkshire. The subcommittee's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to: (i) identifying and evaluating the issues, costs, needs and benefits of existing and non-existing transportation alternatives in the county of Berkshire for visitors that arrive from New York City at the Joseph Scelsi intermodal transportation center in the city of Pittsfield (**Section 2 of the report addresses this item**); (ii) making recommendations to improve ground transportation alternatives for riders who arrive at the intermodal center in the city of Pittsfield to ensure that Berkshire Flyer riders have reasonable access to transportation options to arrive at their next point of destination in the Berkshires (**Section 4**); (iii) collaborating with representatives from the ride-sharing industry and other public and private transportation providers in the county of Berkshire to develop those transportation alternative recommendations (**Section 2**); (iv) collecting and evaluating data on ridership from New York City to the city of Pittsfield (**Section 3**); (v) developing a marketing strategy, in collaboration with individuals and businesses who are employed in the hospitality industry and transportation industry, to promote the seasonal rail service between New York City and the Berkshires (**Section 5**); and (vi) identifying and developing private partnerships to potentially support a pilot season of passenger rail service in calendar year 2020 (**Section 6 & 7**).*

*The first meeting of the subcommittee shall take place not later than September 1, 2018. Members of the subcommittee shall include, but shall not be limited to: a designee of 1Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc., who shall serve as co-chair; a designee of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, who shall serve as co-chair; a designee of the secretary of housing and economic development; a designee of the secretary of transportation from the rail and transit division; a designee of the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority; not less than 3 designees from the hospitality industry in county of Berkshire, who shall be appointed by the co-chairs; a designee of the department of community development of the city of*

*Pittsfield; an elected municipal official from the southern part of the county of Berkshire, who shall be appointed by the cochairs; an elected municipal official from the northern part of the county of Berkshire, who shall be appointed by the co-chairs; a designee of the president of Berkshire County Board of Realtors, Inc.; a designee of the senator from the Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden district established under section 3 of chapter 57 of the General Laws; and existing rail service stakeholders, as deemed necessary by the co-chairs.*

*The subcommittee shall file a report of their findings and recommendations with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on tourism, arts and cultural development, the joint committee on transportation and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation not later than March 1, 2019.*

## **1.1 STUDY GOALS**

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In March of 2018, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Transit & Rail Division in support of the Berkshire Flyer Working Group published a feasibility study report. The purpose of the Berkshire Flyer study was to evaluate the potential for using a route through New York to provide seasonal, weekend-focused passenger rail service between Pittsfield, MA and New York City to improve the linkage between the regional economic engines of New York City and Berkshire County.

The study identified two potential routes between Pittsfield and New York Penn Station with three operating options. The preferred option is a route using the same tracks as the existing Empire Corridor service and Lake Shore limited service, connecting in Albany/Rensselaer. This Friday/Sunday seasonal service could be operated by Amtrak utilizing their existing equipment, allowing for the initiation of a pilot program to test the concept before significant investment or long-term commitments are made, as was done for the Cape Flyer service.

The goals of the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 study are to identify and evaluate the issues, benefits, and challenges to creating a seasonal rail service between New York City and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The goal of the seasonal rail service is to improve the linkage between New York City and Berkshire County. The study will specifically focus on:

- Identifying and evaluating last mile/ local transportation options in Berkshire County
- Evaluating ridership data
- Developing a marketing strategy
- Identifying and developing private partnerships

## **1.2 STUDY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The above-cited legislation identified a designee of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), the regional planning agency for the Berkshire County, and a designee of 1Berkshire, the regional tourism council and economic development organization for the Berkshires to serve as co-chairs for the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee.

### **1.2.1 Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee**

The Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee was convened on August 27, 2018 to carry out the charge identified in the above-cited legislation. The Subcommittee is made up of various stakeholders across Berkshire County that have some working knowledge of existing Berkshire County transportation, tourism and economic development issues. The Subcommittee was structured to identify possible last mile/ local transportation options for the Berkshire Flyer riders to arrive at their next point of destinations in the Berkshires and to develop a marketing strategy to promote the seasonal rail service between New York City and Pittsfield in the Berkshires.

The following persons were invited and subsequently participated in the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee as members:

- Jonathan Butler, 1Berkshire, Co-Chair
- Thomas Matuszko, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Co-Chair
- Senator Adam Hinds, Massachusetts Legislature
- Robert Malnati, Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
- Francisca Heming, MassDOT Highway District 1
- Billy Keane, Berkshire County Board of Realtors
- Christine Hoyt, Adams Selectboard
- Deanna Ruffer, Department of Community Development, City of Pittsfield
- Eddie Sporn, Robin Road Consulting
- Eric Kerns, TOURISTS, North Adams
- Noel Henebury, Hotel on North, Pittsfield
- Jay Green, Berkshire Scenic Railway
- Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak
- Karen Christenson, Barrington Institute
- Zackary Feury, Feigenbaum MCLA Leads Initiative (until December 2018)

The following persons served the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee as staff:

- Anuja Koirala, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Clete Kus, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Lindsey Schmid, 1Berkshire
- Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire
- Bethann S. Steiner, Office of Senator Adam Hinds

Additionally, the following delegates regularly attended the meetings:

- Alfred Enchill, Office of Senator Adam Hinds
- Jon Gould, Office of Senator Adam Hinds
- Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
- Lisa Fletcher – Udel, Office of Representative Farley-Bouvier
- Matthew Russett, Office of U.S. Congressman Richard Neal

### **1.2.2 Subcommittee Meetings**

The Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee meetings were held on the following dates:

- August 27, 2018
- September 24, 2018
- October 29, 2018
- December 17, 2018
- January 28, 2018
- February 25, 2018

Meetings were held at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's office in Pittsfield, MA. All Subcommittee meetings were posted and open to the public. Meeting materials: agenda, presentation, and minutes of the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee meetings can be found at BRPC website: <http://berkshireplanning.org/projects/berkshire-flyer-2.0>.

On December 13, 2018 the Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee members visited the Albany/ Rensselaer Amtrak train station in Rensselaer, NY. The purpose of the visit was to see the station's amenities and understand logistics of the Berkshire Flyer train connection to the Pittsfield track at the Albany/Rensselaer train station.

A pilot service for the Berkshire Flyer would function as an extension of existing Amtrak Empire Service between New York Penn Station and Albany/Rensselaer. This service would use the existing tracks between Pittsfield and New York Penn Station via Albany/ Rensselaer. As shown in the picture on the following page, looking south from the Albany/Rensselaer station there are two separate train tracks connecting New York City to Pittsfield. Upon arrival at the Albany/ Rensselaer station, Amtrak will attach another locomotive to the train to permit the train to continue onto Pittsfield.





### 1.3 BERKSHIRE FLYER ESTIMATES

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The Berkshire Flyer estimates for services and projections to start in 2020 listed below are derived from the Berkshire Flyer Feasibility Study report developed by the MassDOT Transit & Rail Division in support of the Berkshire Flyer Working Group, March 2018.

- **Projected twenty weeks** of service annually from Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day weekend
- **Trip Time:** 3 hours 50 minutes to 4 hours (**Friday:** depart New York Penn station at 2:20 PM – arrive Albany/ Rensselaer at 4:50 PM – arrive Pittsfield at 6:10 PM; **Sunday:** depart Pittsfield at 2:45 PM – arrive Albany/ Rensselaer at 3:55 PM – arrive New York Penn station at 6:45 PM)
- **Ridership:** 2,600 one-way trips
- **Gross Operating Cost for operating the service:** \$421,561
- **Ticket Revenue:** \$184,000
- **Net Operating Subsidy Needed:** \$237,561
- **Estimated Berkshire Flyer fare:** \$70 - \$75 one-way

**Note:** Ridership and Revenue are Amtrak estimates.

## **2. Identification and Evaluation of Last Mile/ Local Transportation Options**

One of the focus areas of this study is to identify potential last mile/ local transportation options that would provide the Berkshire Flyer riders reasonable access to transportation options to arrive at their next point of destination in the Berkshires.

BRPC staff identified and evaluated the issues, costs, needs and benefits of existing and non-existing last mile transportation alternatives in Berkshire County for the Berkshire Flyer riders.

The following steps were involved in identifying and evaluating the existing and non-existing last mile/ local transportation options:

- Inventory and review of existing local transportation services
- Review of existing Amtrak models
- Identification of last mile/ local transportation service gap
- Identification of potential non-existing last mile/ local transportation options

### **2.1 INVENTORY AND REVIEW OF EXISTING LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

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In order to identify the last mile transportation service gaps, an inventory of existing public/ private transportation providers, taxi companies, ride-share, and transportation network companies (TNC's) in Berkshire County along with their existing presence and service range was developed.

Table 1 on the following page lists the existing last mile/ local transportation services in the Berkshires. It shows the service area, hours of service, fleet size, and rider eligibility for each transportation service.

**Table 1 – Inventory of Existing Local Transportation Services**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Day/ Hours of Service</b>	<b># of Vehicles</b>	<b>Rider Eligibility</b>
A List Luxury Car Service	Countywide	24/7	2	General Public
Abbotts Limo & Livery	Countywide	24/7	11	General Public
BRTA Fixed Route Bus Service	Countywide	Mon - Fri: 5:45 AM to 7:20 PM Sat: 7:15 AM to 7:00 PM	14 Bus Routes	General Public
Canyon Ranch	Pick-ups from Airports/ Train Station	Call 72 hours in advance		Canyon Ranch Guests
County Rainbow Taxi	Countywide	24/7	12	General Public
Enterprise Car Rental	Countywide	Mon - Fri: 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Sat: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM; Sun: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM		General Public
Hertz Car Rental	Countywide	Mon – Fri: 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Sat & Sun: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM		General Public
Kripalu	To/From Albany Airport/ Wassiac Train Station/ Downtown Lenox Bus Stop	Thu, Fri, Sat: <u>To Albany</u> – 12:00 PM & 3:30 PM; <u>From Albany</u> – 1:30 PM & 5:00 PM Thu, Fri, Sun: <u>To Wassiac</u> – 2:30 PM <u>From Wassiac</u> – 4:15 PM <u>Lenox Bus Stop</u> – Everyday between 8:00 AM & 9:30 PM		Kripalu Guests
Lenox Taxi & Limo	Countywide	7 days, 6:00 AM to midnight	2	General Public
Lyft	Countywide	24/7 Pending Available Drivers	25 Active Weekly Drivers	General Public
Rose & Cole's Co-op Transport	Countywide	7 days, 5:00 AM to midnight	5	General Public
Taxico	South County (Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington and adjacent towns)	7 days, 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM	3	General Public
Tobi's Limo	Countywide	24/7	6	General Public
Transport the People	Countywide	24/7	11	General Public
Tunnel City Transport	Countywide	Mon – Fri: 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM	22	General Public
Uber	Countywide	24/7 Pending Available Drivers	12 Drivers	General Public

*Source: BRPC, September 2018*

### **2.1.1 BRTA Fixed Route Bus Service**

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) provides public transportation services to its twenty-six-member communities within Berkshire County. The BRTA's service area spans from Williamstown in the North to Great Barrington in the South.

Fixed route service is provided by fourteen bus routes in twelve communities within Berkshire County, Monday through Saturday. The fixed route buses operate every hour from 5:45 AM to 7:20 PM on fixed routes connecting residences, business, and downtowns. BRTA bus Route #1 connects Pittsfield to North County and Route #2 connects to South County. When the fixed route buses are in operation, BRTA provides complementary paratransit transportation to individuals with disabilities as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

On Tuesday, January 22, 2019, BRTA began a pilot program for evening service from 5:55 PM to 9:55 PM connecting Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) to Berkshire Community College on West Street and businesses along East Street and Tyler street connecting to Berkshire Crossing on Hubbard Avenue in Pittsfield.

One-way fare for local travel (Pittsfield and adjacent towns) is \$1.55 using a Charlie Card and \$1.75 for using cash. System-wide fare is \$4.00 using a Charlie Card and \$4.50 in cash per ride.

### **2.1.2 Car Rentals**

Two car rental companies, Enterprise and Hertz, provide car rental service in Berkshire County. Both provide service from their offices in Pittsfield.

Enterprise is located at 526 East Street in Pittsfield. It has one pick-up and drop-off location in Berkshire County. Service hours are Monday to Friday: 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM; Saturday: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM; and Sunday 10 AM – 2:00 PM. Enterprise provides pick-up service to their clients. A compact/ intermediate car rental at Enterprise ranges from \$60 - \$80 per day.

Hertz is located at 811 Dalton Avenue in Pittsfield. Like Enterprise, it has one pick-up and drop-off location in Berkshire County. Service hours are Monday to Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM; Saturday and Sunday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. A compact/ intermediate car rental at Hertz ranges from \$65 - \$90 per day.

### **2.1.3 Canyon Ranch**

Canyon Ranch Resort & Spa located in Lenox, MA provides transportation services to their guests to and from the Albany International Airport, Bradley International Airport, and the Albany/ Rensselaer Train Station. Guests must book transportation services at least 72 hours in advance with registrations.

### **2.1.4 Kripalu Shuttle Service**

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health located in Lenox, MA provides transportation services to their guests. Shuttle service is provided to and from Albany International Airport, Metro North - Wassiac Train Station, and to the Downtown Lenox Bus Stop.

Kripalu, in partnership with the local car service company Tobi's Limo, provides shuttle service to their guests. Service must be booked in advance with registrations. The fee is nonrefundable if the service is cancelled with less than 72 hours' notice. Service hours and schedule is below:

- On Thursday, Friday and Saturday: To Albany Airport – 12:00 PM & 3:00 PM; From Albany Airport - 1:30 PM & 5:00 PM - \$75 one-way fare.
- On Thursday, Friday and Sunday: To Wassiac Station – 2:30 PM & From Wassiac Station 4:15 PM - \$80 one-way fare.

Kripalu reimburses Tobi's Limo for 4 guests at \$60 per guest, a total of \$240 per trip for each trip even if there are less than 4 guests riding the shuttle.

In 2017, there were 415 one-way trips to and from Albany Airport, of which 90 trips had less than 4 guests and 50 trips had more than 10 guests per trip. Whereas, to and from Metro North – Wassiac Station there were 133 one-way trips, of which 125 trips had less than 4 guests per trip. Wassiac Station shuttle had fewer riders compared to Albany International Airport shuttle.

Kripalu also provides Demand Response shuttle service to and from the downtown Lenox Bus Stop to their guests everyday between 8:00 AM and 9:30 PM using their own shuttle van. The fare for the shuttle ride is \$10 one-way. In 2017, there were 727 one-way trips with 1-12 guests per trip to and from Downtown Lenox. According to the Kripalu management team, there has been an increase in use of Intercity buses; Peter Pan and Greyhound, by their clients coming from New York City.



### **2.1.5 Local Taxi Services**

A few local taxi companies provide service in Berkshire County as shown in Table 1. County Rainbow Taxi located in Pittsfield is the largest in Berkshire County. It provides twenty-four-hour service, seven days a week. The company's service area is county-wide but it mostly serves Pittsfield and adjacent towns.

All local taxi companies operate as Demand Response. In order to book a ride, a call must be placed to a local taxi operator. The operator will take your booking and put you on the waiting list. Based on the driver's availability, the operator will prioritize service on a first come first serve basis.

There is a waiting period of 20 – 30 minutes, on average, for the taxi to arrive. Due to unavailability of drivers and the low demand for taxi service, these companies operate at limited capacity.

### **2.1.6 Other Car Services**

There are several car and limo services in Berkshire County with variety of vehicle choices. These services cater to the various transportation needs of tourists and businesses alike.

These private companies provide transportation services to tourists and businesses within Berkshire County and connect them to the Albany International Airport, Bradley International Airport, and the Wassaucott Train station.

### **2.1.7 Turo**

Turo is a peer-to-peer car-sharing company that allows private car owners to rent out their vehicles via online and mobile interface. To rent out a personal vehicle, one must become a member and list the vehicle for at least 9 days per month. The renter is required to set a minimum daily price for the vehicle and set a mileage limit for the vehicle. Users are expected to return personal vehicles fully refueled. Renters select a delivery method and location. Vehicles are insured through Liberty Mutual Insurance.

To rent a vehicle, one must simply be a member of Turo. There is no membership fee. All drivers/ members are screened before vehicles can be rented out. Drivers under 25 years of age pay 30% more or up to \$25 extra per day to rent a vehicle. To rent certain types of high-end vehicles, one may have to pay a refundable security deposit. All payments are done through credit card.

The Turo model is designed primarily for tourists. Its popularity is growing at tourist destinations where the residents rent their primary or secondary vehicles to tourists when they are not using them. Currently there are four vehicles listed in the Berkshires: North Adams, Dalton, Lenox & Great Barrington. Daily rentals range from \$35 to \$175.

### 2.1.8 Uber/ Lyft TNC's

Uber and Lyft are on-demand, peer-to-peer ridesharing transportation network companies (TNC) that can be accessed via their websites and mobile apps. To become an Uber/ Lyft driver; one must register online with these companies and upon approval, can start listing availability and provide service using a personal vehicle.

To use Uber/Lyft service; one must download their mobile app on a smart phone and register with these TNC's by providing appropriate credit card information. After registration, one can start hailing for service using their mobile apps.

Uber and Lyft have a limited presence in the Berkshires. There are 12 Uber drivers and 25 Lyft drivers registered in Berkshire County. Most of the drivers are in Pittsfield. Table 2 compares the fare estimates for Uber and Lyft in Berkshire County.

**Table 2: Fare Estimates for Uber and Lyft**

Cities/ Towns	Uber	Lyft
Pittsfield – North Adams	\$30 - \$45	\$30 - \$48
Pittsfield – Williamstown	\$30 - \$45	\$28 - \$46
Pittsfield – Lenox	\$15 - \$20	\$14 - \$20
Pittsfield – Lee	\$17 - \$26	\$23 - \$33
Pittsfield – Stockbridge	\$20 - \$35	\$23 - \$33
Pittsfield – Great Barrington	\$30 - \$45	\$28 - \$46

Source: Uber & Lyft websites

### 2.1.9 Zipcar

Zipcar is a car-sharing company that provides automobile reservations to its members, billable by minute, hour or day. To become a Zipcar member, an online registration is required. Once approved, the member will receive a zipcard in 3-7 business days. A zipcard is required to unlock and lock the vehicle, keys are located inside the vehicles.

Members pay \$7 monthly or a \$70 annual membership fee in addition to car reservation charges. It costs \$10 per hour or \$60 per day for car rental which includes gas, insurance and 180 free miles per day. Additional miles start at 35 cents per mile.

The Zipcar model is designed for residents and businesses for short trips. Zipcars are located at businesses centers, neighborhoods, airports and transportation hubs where people can access the vehicles easily. Zipcars are popular at Universities/ Colleges; students and staff often use these vehicles for short trips as needed. Zipcars can be more convenient than having a personal vehicle on college campuses.

Williams College has four Zipcar vehicles for student and staff use. Both vehicle pick-up & drop-off zones are located inside the Williams College parking garage.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF EXISTING AMTRAK MODELS**

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Berkshire County is predominantly rural, and tourism drives the local economy. Its unique characteristics, scenic vistas, and New England charm make it an all-season vacation destination. Summer and October/ Fall-foliage are the peak tourist seasons in the Berkshires. The Berkshire Flyer seasonal rail service aims to bring tourists from New York City, who haven't visited the Berkshires before to explore.

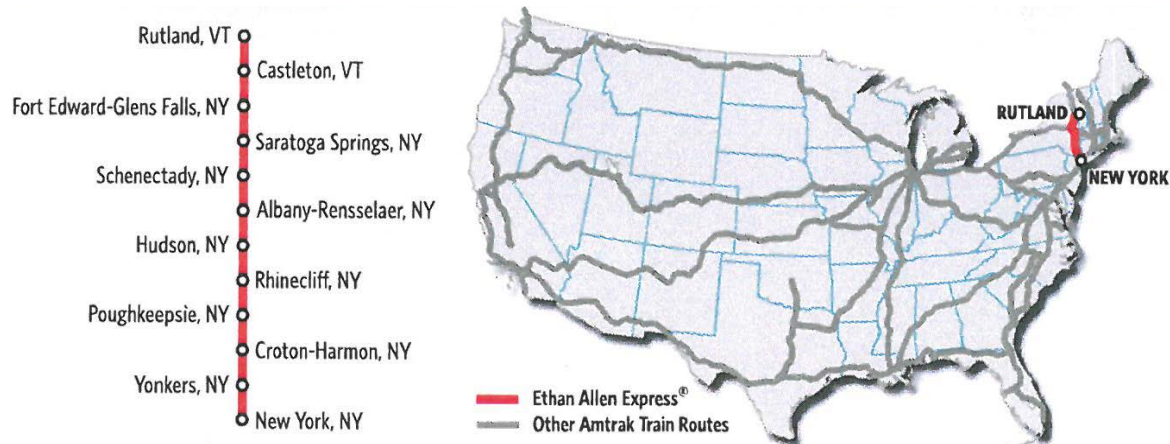
Amtrak provides services to tourist destinations like the Berkshires in the Northeast. To understand the last mile transportation logistics of passenger rail services catering tourist destinations; Amtrak's three existing models: two passenger rail services and one thruway connecting services in the Northeast were reviewed.

The study looked to identify last mile connections, operations and the funding sources. The following section provides an overview of the three existing models studied:

- Ethan Allen Express
- Amtrak Downeaster
- Vermont Shires Connector

## 2.2.1 Ethan Allen Express

Ethan Allen Express is a daily train service that connects Rutland, VT to New York City. It is a 5-hour 30-minute train ride from New York City to Rutland, VT connecting to other Upstate New York stations along its route.



Daily Service	Rutland, VT	New York City
Outbound: Mon – Fri	7:46 AM	1:19 PM
Outbound: Sat – Sun	5:10 PM	11:02 PM
Inbound: Mon – Thu	7:55 PM	2:15 PM
Inbound: Sat – Sun	8:45 PM	3:10 PM
Inbound: Fri	11:26 PM	5:48 PM

Source: Amtrak

Ethan Allen Express passenger rail service is financed primarily through funds made available by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the New York State Department of Transportation.

There are a variety of last mile/ local transportation options available for the Ethan Allen Express riders in Rutland, VT.

**Public Transportation:** Marble Valley Regional Transit District provides fixed route bus service in the City of Rutland, and connects to other towns in Rutland County, Vermont. Bus fare within the City of Rutland is 50 cents per ride and for the connector routes \$2 per ride.

Diamond Express fixed route bus service connects the City of Rutland to Killington, VT, 11.3 miles northeast of Rutland, a popular vacation destination for skiers. The fare is \$2 per ride to get to the Town of Killington and it's a Fare Free Zone in the Killington Ski resorts area.

**Shuttle Service:** Gramps Shuttle, a local car service company in collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting Services, provides shuttle service to Killington Ski resorts from

Rutland train station, connecting Ethan Allen Express riders to Killington, VT. It is a seamless door-to-door service.

Ethan Allen Express one-way fare from New York City to Rutland, VT ranges from \$73 - \$103. Shuttle fare from Rutland train station to Killington Ski Resorts is \$25 one-way ticket that can be purchased from the Amtrak sales platforms in conjunction with the train ticket to Rutland. It is a seamless process. Riders receive a single ticket for both the train ride and the connecting thruway shuttle service. Amtrak receives 20% of the shuttle fare revenue for providing the ticketing service, 80% goes to the shuttle service provider for providing the service. As Amtrak's Thruway Connecting Service provider, Gramps shuttle receives the riders' information a week in advance and the manifest every morning from Amtrak.

During the winter season, Ethan Allen Express is highly used by New York City residents that spend weekends at Killington Ski resorts. On Friday an inbound train to Rutland leaves New York City at 5:48 PM and reaches Rutland, VT at 11:26 PM. On Saturday and Sunday, the outbound train leaves Rutland at 5:10 PM and reaches New York City at 11:02 PM.

For the round-trip customers who wish to ski on their last day, Gramps Shuttle provides extra service for an additional \$10 per person. Gramps Shuttle will assist you with early check out, transfer you to the slopes, store your luggage, and pick you up from the ski area for your ground transfer to Amtrak.

**Other last mile transportation services:** Local taxi companies, car rentals, and other car services are also available to the tourist for last mile transportation in Rutland.

### 2.2.2 Amtrak Downeaster

The Amtrak Downeaster has multiple departures; five round trips daily between Boston, MA and Portland, ME; three of those trips extend to Freeport & Brunswick. It is a 3-hour 25-minute train ride from Boston – North Station to Brunswick, ME.



Source: Amtrak



The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) was established to administer Amtrak Downeaster service. In partnership with NNEPRA, Amtrak provides the train service using its equipment and NNEPRA oversees the overall operations.

NNEPRA funding partners are:

- Federal Transit Authority administers the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds allocated by Maine Department of Transportation to support 80% of Downeaster operating cost needs.
- Federal Railroad Administration provided capital funding through the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail grant and American Reinvestment and Recovery Act grant.

Downeaster trains arrive and depart from North Station in Boston. All other Amtrak services in Boston depart and arrive at South Station and Back Bay Station. MBTA subway lines connect the stations. These stations are located a mile apart, transfer by taxi costs \$10 - \$15.

There is a late-night Downeaster train for Special Events. A special late-night train will depart Boston's North Station at 11:25 PM on concert and game nights. One-way fares range from \$16 - \$31 between Boston, MA and Portland, ME.

The Greater Portland Transit District provides fixed route bus service in the City of Portland, connects to Downeaster train stations and other towns/city in Maine. The fare for METRO local service (includes Portland, Westbrook, Falmouth, and Maine Mall area of South Portland) is \$1.50 per ride. METRO BREEZ Express fare to Brunswick, Freeport, Yarmouth is \$3 one-way.

In addition to the fixed route bus service, local taxi companies, TNC's, car rentals, and car service companies provide door-to-door last mile transportation to the Downeaster riders in Portland and Freeport Maine.

### 2.2.3 Vermont Shires Connector

Vermont Shires Connector is a shuttle service connecting Manchester, VT (3 stops) – Bennington, VT (1 stop) – Albany, NY (3 stops). This service was established in August of 2017 in collaboration with the state of Vermont, Amtrak and the Premier Coach/ Vermont Translines.



*Source: Premier Coach*

Premier Coach, a private transportation service company, in collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting Services provides shuttle service connecting Manchester, VT and Bennington, VT to the Albany/ Rensselaer train station, Albany Greyhound bus station, and Albany International Airport.

Premier Coach runs two round trips daily from Manchester, VT using a 14 passenger lift equipped Sprinter van. It takes 2 hours 33 minutes one-way to travel 80 miles. Table 3 on the following page shows the schedule for the Vermont Shires Connector and the connecting trains to and from New York City.


**Table 3: Vermont Shires Connector Schedule**

VERMONT SHIRES THRUWAY CONNECTION


6236		6244		Thruway Bus						6063		6491			
Daily		Daily		Mile	Normal Days of Operation				City Code	Daily		Daily			
B	5 55A	B	1 40P	0	Dp	Manchester Center, VT				MCV	Ar	D	12 20P	D	8 15P
B	5 57A	B	1 42P	1	Dp	Manchester Center, VT - Hampton Inn				MCH	Ar	D	12 17P	D	8 12P
B	6 00A	B	1 45P	1	Dp	Manchester, VT - Equinox Resort				MCQ	Ar	D	12 15P	D	8 10P
	6 40A		2 25P	27	Dp	Bennington, VT				BNI	Ar		11 40A		7 35P
	7 50A		3 35P	67	Ar	Albany-Rensselaer, NY				ALB	Dp		10 20A		6 15P
	8 30A		4 15P	64	Ar	Albany International Airport				ABA	Dp		9 35A		5 30P
236/260		244		Connecting Train Number						63		291			
Mo-Fr/SaSu		Daily		Mile	Normal Days of Operation				City Code	Daily		Daily			
	8 20A		4 05P	0	Dp	Albany-Rensselaer, NY				ALB	Ar		9 50A		5 45P
	8 45A		4 30P	28		Hudson, NY				HUD			9 20A		5 15P
	9 07A		4 52P	53		Rhinecliff, NY				RHI			9 00A		4 55P
	9 20A		5 10P	68		Poughkeepsie, NY				POU			8 45A		4 40P
	9 59A		5 50P	109		Croton-Harmon, NY				CRT			8 03A		3 58P
	10 21A			127		Yonkers, NY				YNK			7 44A		3 39P
	10 54A					New York, NY - Grand Central Terminal				NYG					
			6 45P	142	Ar	New York, NY - Penn Station				NYP	Dp		7 15A		3 15P

Source: Amtrak

The one-way maximum fare for the shuttle is \$20, purchased through Amtrak sales platforms together with the train ticket. It is a seamless process, riders receive one ticket for both the train ride and connecting thruway shuttle service as shown on the sample ticket below.



RES# F3A275-04DEC18



PRESENT THIS DOCUMENT FOR BOARDING

RESERVATION NUMBER F3A275

**NYP** ➔ **MCQ**

NEW YORK PENN, NY      MANCHESTER EQUINOX, VT

**One-Way**

DECEMBER 7, 2018

TRAIN	MAPLE LEAF	NEW YORK (PENN STATION) - ALBANY-RENSSELAER	DEPARTS	ARRIVES (Fri Dec 7)
<b>63</b>	<b>Dec 7, 2018</b>	1 Reserved Coach Seat	<b>7:15 AM</b>	<b>9:50 AM</b>
BUS	AMTRAK THRUWAY CONNECTING SERVICE	ALBANY-RENSSELAER - MANCHESTER (EQUINOX RESORT)	DEPARTS	ARRIVES (Fri Dec 7)
<b>6063</b>	<b>Dec 7, 2018</b>	1 Reserved Thruway Seat	<b>10:20 AM</b>	<b>12:10 PM</b>
Operated by VERMONT SHIRES CONNECTOR				

PASSENGERS (1)

TEST, AA      ADULT

AMTRAK GUEST REWARDS

No member number provided. Join at Amtrak.com

Proper identification is required for all passengers. This document is valid for only passengers listed. See www.amtrak.com/ID for details.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

• VERMONT SHIRES CONNECTOR ONE-WAY FARE

• VERMONT SHIRES CONNECTOR-OPERATED BY PREMIER COACH

• Try the FindYourWay app for personalized train and station information at New York Penn Station. Download it on Google Play or the Apple App Store today, or learn more at [Amtrak.com/findyourway](http://Amtrak.com/findyourway).

• eTickets for Reserved services are valid only for the specific train number, date and accommodation type booked.

• When should you arrive at the station? Check the recommended arrival times for your departure station at [Amtrak.com/stations](http://Amtrak.com/stations). Allow additional time if you require ticketing/baggage services or boarding assistance, or if you are boarding at a Canadian station.

• Tickets are non-transferable. They are valid only for the personal use of the passenger(s) named on the ticket.

• For Amtrak travel information, or to make adjustments to your travel plans, please visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), or call 1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245).

• Your printed eTicket travel document shows the services you booked. If you change your booking but do not reprint the document, it will not reflect your current itinerary. You may obtain an updated copy of your eTicket at Amtrak.com. At some stations, a gate agent may need to view your eTicket prior to boarding (learn more at [Amtrak.com/boarding](http://Amtrak.com/boarding)).

• Changes to your itinerary may affect your fare. Refund and exchange restrictions and penalties for failure to cancel unwanted travel may apply. For more information please visit [Amtrak.com/changes](http://Amtrak.com/changes).

• Carry-on baggage is limited to 2 personal items, 14x11x7" / 25lbs per item, and 2 bags, 28x22x14" / 50lbs per bag, per passenger. You may be charged a baggage fee or denied boarding if your items exceed these limitations. See the baggage policy at [Amtrak.com/baggage](http://Amtrak.com/baggage).

• Check the departure board or ask a uniformed Amtrak employee to find out where to board your train.

• If You See Something Say Something! Contact Amtrak Police at 1-800-331-0008 or Text to APD11 (27311).

Source: Amtrak

Premier Coach receives live information of the shuttle riders through the phone app provided by Amtrak. The shuttle driver scans the riders ticket using the phone app. Amtrak receives 20% of the shuttle fare revenue for providing the ticketing service, 80% goes to the shuttle service provider for providing the service.

Vermont Shires Connector shuttle service is financed primarily through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds made available by the Vermont Agency of Transportation; the fare for the shuttle is highly subsidized. Ridership for the month of October 2018 was 616 one-way trips; fare revenue was 13% and 87% subsidy.

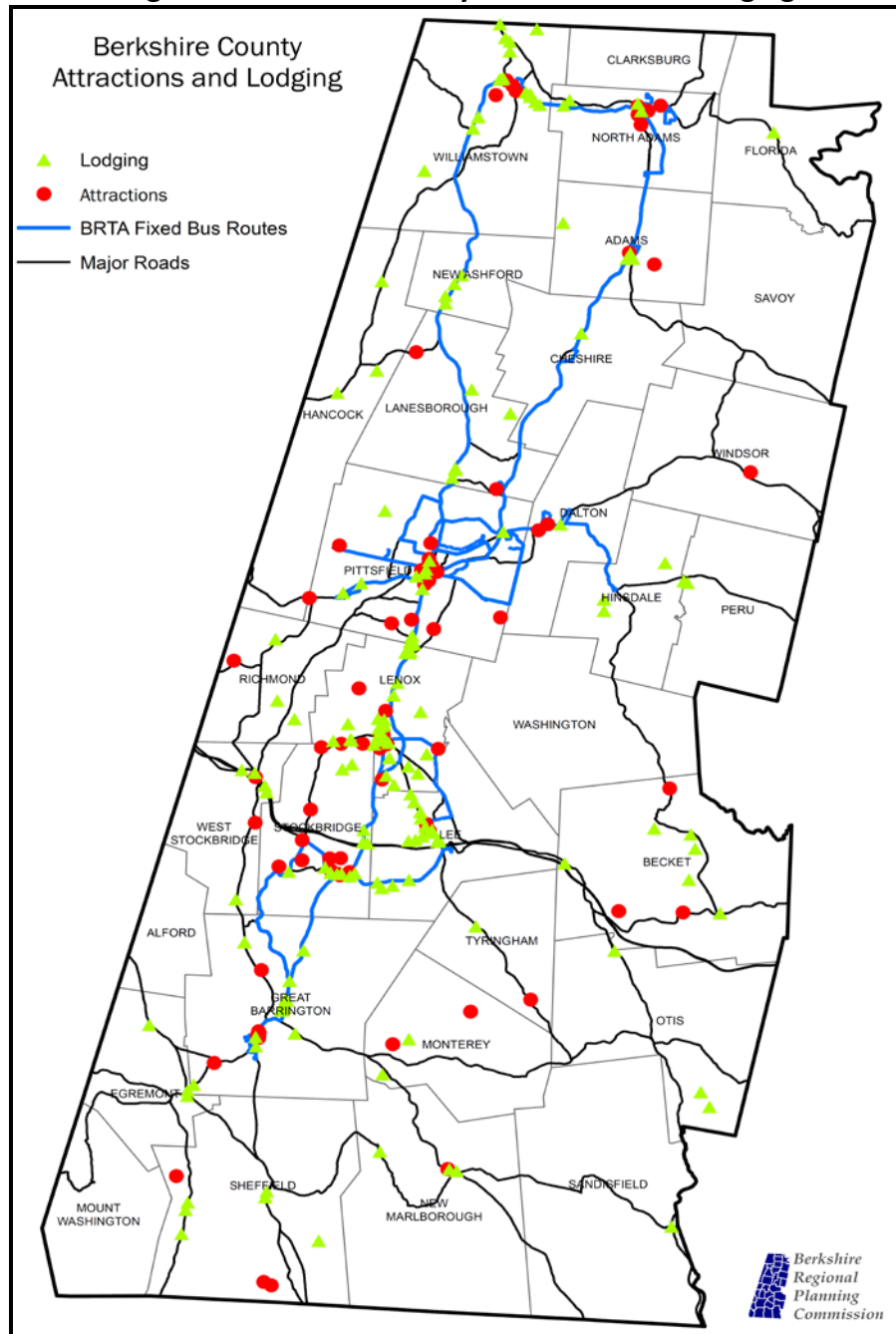
A review of these three Amtrak models provides insight into last mile transportation logistics of passenger rail services provided by Amtrak. To summarize the findings:

- In collaboration with local transportation providers, Amtrak provides last mile connecting services to its train riders.
- Amtrak provides ticketing services to the Amtrak Thruway Connecting service providers.
- Amtrak receives 20% of the ticket sale revenues for providing the seamless ticketing for the last mile connecting services.
- Maine Department of Transportation supports 80% of Downeaster operating cost needs using CMAQ funds.
- Vermont Shires Connector shuttle service is financed primarily through CMAQ funds made available by the Vermont Agency of Transportation.
- Ethan Allen Express passenger rail service is financed primarily through funds made available by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the New York State Department of Transportation.
- For last mile connections, Amtrak train riders have a variety of transportation options:
  - Seamless shuttle services provided by local transportation providers in collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting services;
  - Public transportation provided by Regional Transit Authorities;
  - Local taxis and other car services;
  - On-demand ridesharing services provided by TNC's: Uber and Lyft;
  - Car rental services.

## 2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF LAST MILE/ LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE GAP

The third step in this process considered identifying and evaluating service gaps in last mile/ local transportation services. To identify last mile transportation service gaps, a mapping of Berkshire County Attractions and Lodging providers were overlayed with the BRTA Fixed Route Bus service.

**Figure 1: Berkshire County Attractions and Lodging**





The mapping of Berkshire County attractions and lodging overlaid with the BRTA fixed routes bus service as shown in figure 1 and the inventory of existing local transportation services, helped identify the existing last mile services and service gaps.

As mentioned previously, a variety of local transportation services are available in Berkshire County and these services are summarized below:

- Public transportation provided by BRTA is limited, there is no evening and Sunday service. Fourteen fixed route buses provide service in twelve Berkshire County communities.
- All other transportation services are provided by private companies. These taxi and car services are expensive. Due to low demand and unavailability of drivers, they operate at limited capacity, resulting in long wait times for rides.
- Uber and Lyft have a presence in Pittsfield and in urban areas with limited number of drivers due to low demand for the service.
- Enterprise and Hertz provide rental car services to Berkshire County residents and tourists, operating from their offices in Pittsfield. Both have only one pick-up and drop-off location in Berkshire County located in Pittsfield.
- Zipcar is available in Williamstown and limited to Williams College students and staff.
- Turo, a peer-to-peer car sharing company, exists in Berkshire County with four vehicles listed for rent on its website.
- Kripalu and Canyon Ranch provide local transportation services to their guests in partnership with local car service companies.

## **2.4 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL NON-EXISTING LAST MILE/ LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS**

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The final step is the identification of potential non-existing last mile/ local transportation options that would provide reasonable access for the Berkshire Flyer riders to arrive at their next point of destination in the Berkshires.

With an objective of providing a seamless, door-to-door last mile transportation service to the Berkshire Flyer riders, a few possible options were considered. All tourists have different transportation needs and providing options would allow riders to select the option that best fits their needs.

In the process of identifying potentially new last mile transportation options for the Berkshire Flyer riders, BRPC staff collaborated with public and private transportation providers in Berkshire County. The collaboration efforts are documented in the following sections.

### **2.4.3 Collaboration for Enterprise Car Rental**

Enterprise provides car rental service in Pittsfield. Their office is located at 526 East Street. Enterprise is a popular car rental company seen at airports, train stations, transportation hubs, and tourist destinations.

The Enterprise office in Pittsfield is approximately one mile from the ITC, which is not a reasonable walking distance for the Berkshire Flyer riders to pick-up their rental cars. The Enterprise model provides pick-up service to its clients in urban areas and at transportation hubs.

Enterprise's service hours in Pittsfield are Monday to Friday: 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM; Saturday: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM; and Sunday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The current service hours will not correlate with the Berkshire Flyer train schedule.

The Enterprise office in Pittsfield was contacted and the location manager showed interest in providing rental car service to Berkshire Flyer riders. The Enterprise location manager provided contact information to the business management team at the area office located in Windsor, Connecticut for further coordination.

A parking facility owned by the City of Pittsfield is located immediately across the street from the ITC. In coordination with the City of Pittsfield, it was determined that arrangements can be made with Enterprise to utilize some designated parking spaces at this location. The McKay Street parking lot could be utilized for additional parking of rental vehicles ready for pick-up by Berkshire Flyer Riders.

Enterprise would have their staff present at the ITC to guide the Berkshire Flyer riders for car rental pick-up and drop-off at designated parking spaces at the Columbus Avenue parking facility.

### **2.4.1 Collaboration for Berkshire Flyer Shuttle**

Transport the People Inc, a local private transportation company in Pittsfield, would provide a shuttle van service to Berkshire Flyer riders arriving at Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Center. Service would be provided to and from their lodging destinations in northern and southern Berkshires in collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting services. The proposed shuttle service will be accessible to individuals with disabilities, as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Acknowledging the limitations of existing last mile transportation options in Berkshire County, a seamless, door-to-door shuttle service was identified to provide the Berkshire Flyer riders a guaranteed ride to and from their lodging destinations.

A review of the existing Amtrak models and coordination with Amtrak provided insight into the seamless ticketing process provided by Amtrak through Amtrak Thruway Connecting services. Amtrak executes an interline or dedicated service contract with local transportation providers for providing last mile connecting services.

Interline service is where, an existing carrier is operating a service and Amtrak sells an allotted number of seats designated by the carrier. The operating carrier will set the fare and Amtrak will sell the tickets through their sales platforms. Amtrak receives 20% of the fare revenue for providing the ticketing service. Interline contracts can be executed quickly: approximately 1-3 weeks depending on whether the carrier has the insurance specifications that Amtrak requires and the language in the contract is accepted by both parties. To accommodate Amtrak train connections, the operating carrier adjusts their shuttle service schedules.

Dedicated service is where there are no carriers that operate last mile transportation services. Amtrak will then contract a carrier through a request for proposal (RFP) process to operate the service. Amtrak only has a handful of dedicated services except for the California network. Dedicated contracts could take several months, due to the competitive bidding that takes place. For both the interline and dedicated service contacts, most of the time required is for creating a ticketing service in Amtrak reservation systems.

Transport the People Inc., together with its sister companies, County Rainbow Taxi and CRT, Inc is the largest private transportation provider in the Berkshires. All three companies combined have a fleet of 102 vehicles. Transport the People has been identified to provide the shuttle service for the Berkshire Flyer riders based on its capacity and willingness to participate in the 2020 pilot.

#### **2.4.2 Collaboration for BRTA Train Connector Bus**

BRTA is the sole public transportation provider in the Berkshires. Its fourteen fixed route buses provide transportation in twelve Berkshire County communities. The fixed route buses operate from Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) in Pittsfield.

A pilot for the Berkshire Flyer train would bring tourists from New York City to the Intermodal Transportation Center in Pittsfield. Connecting the BRTA buses with the Berkshire Flyer train would enhance multi-modal connectivity.

BRTA fixed route buses operate every hour from 5:55 AM to 7:20 PM from Monday to Saturday on fixed routes connecting residences, business, and downtowns. BRTA Route #1 bus connects Pittsfield to North Adams via Tyler Street & Route 8. BRTA Route #2 bus connects Pittsfield to Lee & Great Barrington (connection to Route #21 at Prime Outlets in Lee) in South via Route 7 & 20.

The Berkshire Attractions and Lodging map shown in figure 1 portrays the BRTA fixed routes. This map was used to identify possible BRTA bus routes that would connect the Berkshire Flyer Riders to and from their lodging destinations to major attractions in the Berkshires.

To connect the BRTA buses with the Berkshire Flyer train, two fixed routes originating at the ITC and connecting to northern and southern Berkshires were identified.

The North County connector would start at the ITC and connect Pittsfield - Lanesborough – New Ashford – Williamstown – North Adams – Cheshire and back to the ITC, via North Street - Route 7 – Route 2 – Route 8 – Tyler Street – North Street. The 48-mile loop would take approximately 1 hour 25 minutes to complete.

The South County connector would start at the ITC and connect Pittsfield – Lenox – Lee – Stockbridge – Great Barrington and back to the ITC, via Route 7/20 – Route 7A – Route 7/20 – Route 102 – Route 7 – Route 7/20. The 51-mile loop would take approximately 1 hour 35 minutes to complete.

These train connector buses would operate one run each on Friday evening connecting the Berkshire Flyer train North and South. On Sunday afternoon, the connector buses run from North and South county back to the ITC, for the return train to New York City.

When the proposed fixed route buses are in operation, BRTA will provide complementary paratransit transportation to individuals with disabilities as required under the ADA.

The cost of operating the two train connector buses, one on Friday and Sunday for twenty weeks would cost approximately \$25,000. Enhancing multi-modal connectivity would provide Berkshire Flyer riders with affordable last mile transportation options and will likely benefit the residents and businesses along the newly established fixed route.

## 2.5 COMPARISON MATRIX OF POSSIBLE LAST MILE/ LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Table 4 below compares the pros and cons of possible last mile transportation options identified for Berkshire Flyer riders.

**Table 4: Possible Last Mile/ Local Transportation Options**

Service	Estimated Cost to Berkshire Flyer Riders for Service	Estimated Cost for Providing Service	Pros	Cons
BF Shuttle (Transport the People)	\$35 one-way \$60 round-trip	Provided by private car service company in collaboration with Amtrak	Guaranteed, seamless, door-to-door to lodging establishments	Doesn't provide accessibility for the duration of stay
BRTA Bus Service (BF Train Connector)	\$1.75 Local \$4.50 Systemwide per ride	\$25,000 for 20 weeks of service (two buses on Friday & Sunday; each to & from North & South County)	Affordable; enhances multi-modal connectivity; provides service to residents and businesses too	Destination needs to be on bus route; travel time longer than other transportation services
Car Rentals – Enterprise/ Hertz	\$60 - \$80 per day	N/A	Provides accessibility for the duration of stay; flexible	Valid driver's license required
Local Taxis	\$25 - \$60 per ride outside Pittsfield	N/A	Door-to-door; cost-effective for group of 2-3 riders	Cost for service expensive; on average 20-30 minutes of wait time
Other Car Services	\$50 - \$150 per ride	N/A	Door-to-door; cost-effective for larger groups	Cost per service very expensive/ not affordable
Turo	\$35 - \$175 per day	N/A	Provides accessibility for the duration of stay	Members only; need smart phone; limited availability
Uber/Lyft TNC's	\$15 to \$45 per ride	N/A	Door-to-door	Need a smart phone, credit/ debit card; few drivers in Berkshire County; cost for service expensive; on average 20-30 minutes of wait time
Zipcar	\$7 monthly or \$70 annually + \$10 per hour or \$60 per day	N/A	Provides accessibility for the duration of stay	Members only; need zipcard, smart phone; not available/ limited availability



### 3. Evaluation of Ridership Data

A pilot for the Berkshire Flyer service is focused on seasonal weekend travel from New York City to Berkshire County and is projected to serve two primary customers:

- Weekend tourists from New York City destined to the many cultural, environmental and historic attractions in the Berkshires, and
- Berkshire County second home owners from New York City.

Baseline information on socioeconomic and demographic characteristic of tourists coming to the Berkshires was compiled from available data pulled from two previous studies:

- MCLA Berkshire Flyer Market Research Report, December 2017
- 1Berkshire Visitors and Prospective Relocators Study, June 2013

Information on visitors' place of origin, travel patterns, what they do in the Berkshires and where they choose lodging was obtained from the above documentations. This information is important in considering future targeted marketing/ promotion campaigns seeking to highlight Berkshire County's attractive qualities as a tourist destination. As previously mentioned, the tourism sector is an important component of Berkshire County's economy.

#### **3.1 MCLA BERKSHIRE FLYER MARKET RESEARCH REPORT, DECEMBER 2017**

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The Berkshire Flyer Market Research Report was developed by students from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts for the Berkshire Flyer Working Group in December 2017.

A survey was sent by email to a total of 70 attractions, 6 chamber of commerce, and 173 lodging establishments in Berkshire County. Of these surveys, responses were received from 20 attractions (29%), 2 chamber of commerce (33%) and 10 lodging providers (6%).

A link to the survey was posted on social media accounts (e.g. Facebook) of 1Berkshire, Berkshire Theater Group, Mass MoCA and the City of North Adams, yielding 450 responses. Approximately 40% of the respondents were Berkshire County residents.

Table 5 on next page summarizes the survey results.

**Table 5: Berkshire Flyer Market Research Survey Summary**

Are you in favor of expanding rail service between the Berkshire and NYC?	Yes – 99.1%		No – 0.9%		
Would you use this service if existed?	Yes	I and my friends/family would	No	No, but I know people that would	
	42.7%	51.8%	0.5%	5.0%	
How often would you use this service?	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly		
	11.2%	57.8%	31.0%		
Time spent in the Berkshires?	Few Days	A Week	>A Week		
	31.3%	18.4%	6.9%		
TRIP PURPOSE					
Cultural Attractions	Visiting Friends and Family		Hiking/ Camping/ Fishing		Skiing/ Snowboarding
30.5%	25.3%		3.3%		1.2%
FINAL DESTINATION					
Pittsfield	North Adams	Lenox	Great Barrington	Lee	Williamstown
22.4%	15.5%	13.8%	9.1%	2.9%	9.5%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
<\$30,000	\$30,000 - \$69,999	\$70,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$150,000- \$200,000	>\$200,000
14.7%	26.2%	18.1%	19.2%	7.1%	14.7%
SEATING PREFERENCE					
Coach		Business		First	
81.4%		14.6%		4%	

The proposed Berkshire Flyer train service was favored by 99% of the respondents. Ninety five percent indicated that either they or their family and friends would use the Berkshire Flyer service if it existed. The top two trip purpose; were visiting cultural attractions and visiting friends and family in the Berkshires.

Respondents final destinations in the Berkshires were spread out amongst North, Central and South County. Fifty-nine percent of the respondent's household income were \$70,000 or higher. For seating preference on the Berkshire Flyer train, 81.4 % would prefer coach class.

## 3.2 1BERKSHIRE VISITORS AND PROSPECTIVE RELOCATORS STUDY, JUNE 2013

Available data from the 1Berkshire Visitors and Prospective Relocators Study, June 2013 helped establish baseline information of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the tourists coming to the Berkshires.

Survey data was composed of 6,257 respondents from both the internal and external sample. A total of 56,007 travelers were invited to take the survey. The internal sample (1Berkshire contacts) of 44,007 travelers and an external sample of 12,000 demographically balanced travelers from the Berkshires key feeder states.

The following tables on the next few pages summarize the characteristics of tourists coming to the Berkshires.

**Table 6: Experience with the Berkshires**

Experience with the Berkshires	1Berkshire	External
Have Visited Berkshires	92.9%	29.8%
Overnight Stay	69.5%	22.7%
People in Party	2.5	2.6
Number of Nights	3.4	2.9
Day Trip	23.4%	7.1%
People in Party	2.8	2.8

A majority of the tourists (93%) coming to the Berkshires have visited the Berkshires before. Seventy percent of the tourists stay overnight in the Berkshires. The average number of tourists traveling together is 2.5. The average duration of stay in the Berkshires is 3.4 nights.

**Table 7: Seasonality**

Seasonality	1Berkshire	External
May	1.7%	6.9%
June	8.0%	8.1%
July	33.7%	18.9%
August	36.0%	20.6%
September	4.2%	4.7%
October	3.8%	9.4%

Summer is the peak tourist season in the Berkshires. The month of August has the highest number of tourists followed by July.

**Table 8: Travel Party Composition**

Travel Party Composition	1Berkshire	External
Traveling with 1 other adult	73.4%	58.5%
Traveling with children	11.4%	19.1%
Traveling alone	5.1%	6.7%
Traveling with non-family group	4.8%	8.6%
Other	5.2%	7.2%

Majority of the tourists (74%) coming to the Berkshires are travelling with one other adult.

**Table 9: Demographics – Gender**

Demographics - Gender	1Berkshire	External
Male	40.9%	55.6%
Female	59.1%	44.4%

**Table 10: Demographics – Marital Status**

Demographics – Marital Status	1Berkshire	External
Single	19.0%	25.6%
Married/ Life Partner	74.7%	61.5%
Serious Relationship	6.3%	12.9%

**Table 11: Demographics - Age**

Demographics - Age	1Berkshire	External
18 – 24	0.9%	10.7%
25 - 34	5.2%	11.4%
35 – 44	8.2%	13.3%
45 – 54	18.6%	23.2%
55 – 64	33.9%	26.0%
65 – 74	25.5%	12.4%
75+	7.8%	2.2%

**Table 12: Demographics - Income**

<b>Demographics - Income</b>	<b>1Berkshire</b>	<b>External</b>
< \$20,000	1.5%	4.8%
\$20,000 - \$49,999	9.6%	15.5%
\$50,000 – \$74,999	16.4%	17.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	18.8%	17.8%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	24.7%	23.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	13.6%	10.8%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	9.0%	5.0%
\$300,000+	6.5%	5.2%

**Table 13: Demographics - Profession**

<b>Demographics - Profession</b>	<b>1Berkshire</b>	<b>External</b>
Professional	52.2%	55.6%
Skilled Worker	2.9%	4.8%
Government	2.8%	3.9%
Salesperson	2.0%	4.6%
Military	0.1%	0.2%
Homemaker	3.0%	2.1%
Retired	29.9%	13.6%
Other	7.1%	15.1%

Tables 9 to 13 show the demographic characteristics of the tourist visiting the Berkshires. The majority of tourists are female; most of them are married (75%). Sixty-seven percent of tourists are 55 years of age or older.

The majority of Berkshire County tourists are professionals followed by retirees at 30%. Seventy three percent of tourists have a household income of \$75,000 or higher.

**Table 14: Trip Purpose**

<b>Trip Purpose – Overnight Visitors</b>	<b>1Berkshire</b>	<b>External</b>
Pleasure	70.2%	50.0%
Special Event	20.9%	8.1%
Visit Friends/ Relatives	5.9%	17.4%
Business	0.9%	14.0%
Attend a Conference	0.8%	3.5%
Other	1.3%	7.0%

Pleasure is the number one trip purpose for visiting the Berkshires followed by attending special events.

**Table 15: Mode of Transportation**

Mode of Transportation	1Berkshire	External
Personal Auto	90.2%	86.2%
Rental Auto	6.0%	6.9%
Commercial Plane	2.5%	2.0%
Chartered Bus	0.5%	2.1%
Motorcycle	0.2%	0.0%
Train	0.2%	2.3%
RV	0.2%	4.0%
Private Plane	0.1%	0.0%

Ninety percent of tourists use their personal automobile to visit the Berkshires.

**Table 16: Lodging Choice**

Lodging - Overnight Visitors	1Berkshire	External
Hotel	37.1%	33.7%
Inn	15.2%	9.3%
Bed & Breakfast	17.6%	15.1%
Vacation Home	7.0%	4.6%
Timeshare	11.5%	9.3%
With Friends or Relatives	5.5%	14.2%
Other	8.5%	11.4%

Fifty two percent of Berkshire County tourists prefer a hotel and/or Inn for lodging followed by bed & breakfast by 17.6%, and timeshare by 11.5%.

**Table 17: Spending**

Spending - Overnight Visitors	1Berkshire	External
Lodging	\$476.87	\$600.51
Dining	\$238.49	\$163.24
Cultural	\$196.77	\$81.72
Shopping	\$128.92	\$93.29
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>\$1,041.05</b>	<b>\$938.76</b>

Overnight visitors spend on average \$500 on lodging and \$240 on dining. Overall, they spend \$1000 per trip in the Berkshires.



**Table 18: Top 10 Metro Origin Profile**

<b>Top 10 Metro Origin Profile</b>	<b>1Berkshire</b>	<b>External</b>
<b>Boston</b>	21.3%	20.9%
<b>New York</b>	13.2%	20.9%
<b>Hartford</b>	3.9%	7.0%
<b>Springfield</b>	2.8%	4.7%
<b>Worcester</b>	2.5%	7.0%
<b>Concord</b>	2.4%	0.0%
<b>New Haven</b>	2.3%	2.3%
<b>Framingham</b>	2.2%	0.0%
<b>Providence</b>	2.0%	0.0%
<b>Philadelphia</b>	2.0%	4.7%

Thirty-five to forty percent of tourists coming to the Berkshires are from New York City and Boston.

**Summarizing the findings on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of tourists coming to the Berkshires:**

- Ninety three percent of the tourists coming to the Berkshires have visited the Berkshires before.
- Seventy percent of the tourists stay overnight, the average duration of stay is 3.4 nights.
- Seventy four percent of tourists travel to the Berkshires with one other adult. The average number of people in the group are 2.5.
- The month of August has the highest number of tourists in the Berkshires followed by July.
- Sixty-seven percent of tourists are 55 years of age or older.
- A majority of tourists are female.
- Seventy-five percent are married.
- Fifty-two percent of tourists are professionals followed by retirees at 30%.
- Seventy-three percent of tourists have a household income of \$75,000 or higher.
- Pleasure is the number one trip purpose followed by attending special events.
- Ninety percent of tourists travel to the Berkshires using their personal automobile.
- Hotels and Inns are preferred lodging choices in the Berkshires followed by Bed & Breakfasts and Timeshares.
- Overnight visitors spend on average \$1000 per trip in the Berkshires. Fifty percent of the spending is for lodging.
- Thirty-five to forty percent of tourists coming to the Berkshires are from New York City and Boston.

## **4. Recommendations for Last Mile Transportation**

Acknowledging the limitations of existing last mile transportation options in Berkshire County, and the objective of providing the Berkshire Flyer riders reasonable access to transportation options to arrive at their next point of destination in the Berkshires, the following last mile transportation options are recommended:

- Contract with car rental companies to provide vehicles ready for pick-up and drop-off adjacent to the ITC. Their staff should be present to guide the Berkshire Flyer riders for car rentals. The locations for rental car parking would be the Columbus Avenue parking facility and overflow parking would be located at the McKay Street parking lot.
- A seamless, door-to-door shuttle service to be provided by an identified private carrier in collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting services for the Berkshire Flyer riders arriving at the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center to and from their lodging destinations. The proposed shuttle service will be accessible to individuals with disabilities, as required under the ADA.
- BRTA to operate two fixed route train connector buses on Friday evening originating at the ITC and connecting to northern and southern Berkshires. On Sunday afternoon, there will be a return service from North and South back to the ITC. Enhancing multi-modal connectivity would provide the Berkshire Flyer riders with affordable last mile transportation options and will likely benefit the residents and businesses along the newly established BRTA fixed route. When the proposed fixed route buses are in operation, BRTA will provide ADA complementary paratransit transportation to individuals with disabilities.
- On-demand ridesharing services like Uber, Lyft and Turo which have a growing presence in the Berkshires will grow organically as the demand for such services is expected to increase as a result of tourists arriving in the Berkshires via the Berkshire Flyer train.
- The Berkshire Flyer riders will have the option to utilize local taxis and car services. These services will grow organically too as the demand for such services increase.

## 5. Developing a Brand Identity and Marketing Strategy

After the initial Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Subcommittee meeting, it was determined that 1Berkshire would subcontract with a marketing firm specializing in brand creation and strategy. The charge of this firm would be to conduct potential audience research, develop a brand identity/logo, and advise on how that identity/logo could be integrated into a future campaign.

After issuing a request for proposals (RFP), 1Berkshire assembled a Review Taskforce of local marketing practitioners including Eric Kerns from TOURISTS Welcome/Bright Ideas Brewing, Jodi Joseph from MASS MoCA, Margit Hotchkiss from the Norman Rockwell Museum, and 1Berkshire staff. Three submissions were received, and the Taskforce elected to contract with Brigade, a firm based in Hadley, MA. The Taskforce then worked with Brigade, advising on a variety of marketing considerations.

### 5.1 RESEARCH PROCESS

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- Interviewed Taskforce and key regional stakeholders
- Created and distributed a follow-up survey to 20+ regional stakeholders
- Reviewed regional landscape and audience trends, including non-direct competitors with similar challenges
- Reviewed key documents including Berkshire Flyer: Pittsfield to New York Feasibility Study, Berkshire Flyer Market Research Report, Berkshire Flyer Ridership Survey, and Berkshire Flyer Working Group Presentation with MassDOT
- Conducted top-level internet research with particular focus on editorial content, as well as NYC resident-generated content about The Berkshires and the reasons for their impressions of the region

### 5.2 TARGET AUDIENCE FINDINGS

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1. Second-home owners in the Berkshires (*Secondary audience*)
  - Generally older, familiar with The Berkshires, and wealthier
  - They are already coming here due to their investment in housing, and have an interest in train service
  - The branding shouldn't alienate them
2. Weekend tourists looking to visit (*Primary audience*)
  - Generally younger, less familiar with the area
  - Attracting this population to the area is critical
  - The brand should pull them to the region and generate buzz and interest

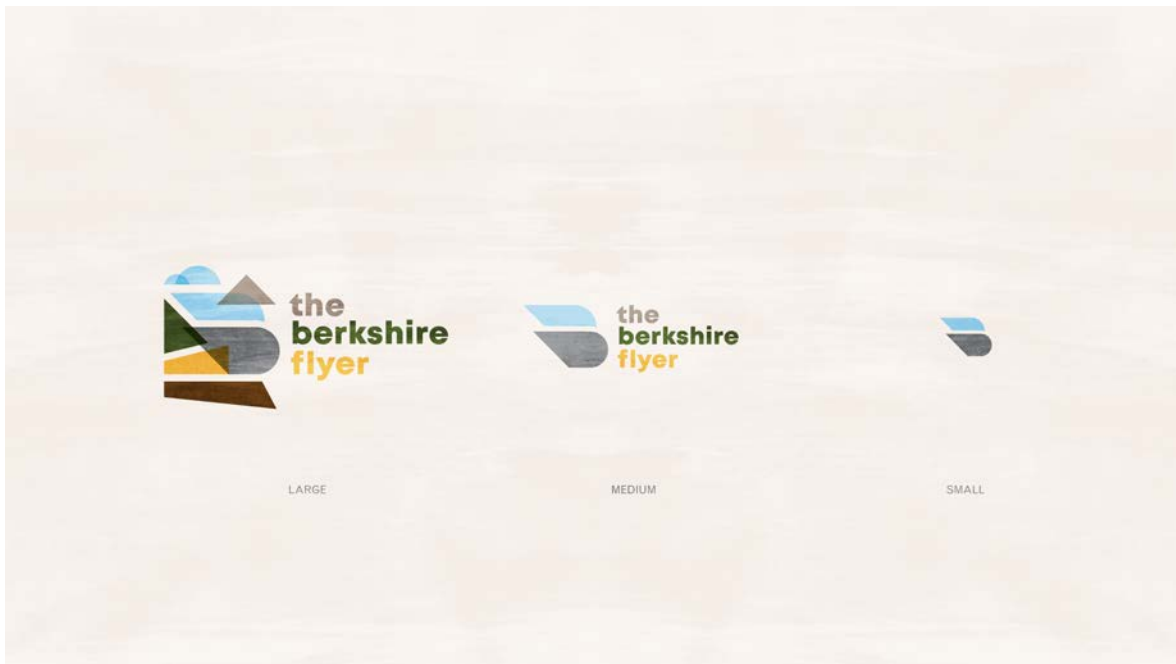
The Taskforce determined that the primary goal was to attract new visitors, establishing a net gain from the Berkshire Flyer. In pursuit of this goal, the primary marketing focus should be on the second group - young weekend visitors.

### 5.2.1 Profile of Weekend Visitors

- Younger people, primarily couples (27-47 years old)
- Primarily mid-older Millennials (27-38)
- Also inclusive of younger-mid Generation X (39-47)
- Primarily car-free
- New York metropolitan area residents

## 5.3 THE BRAND

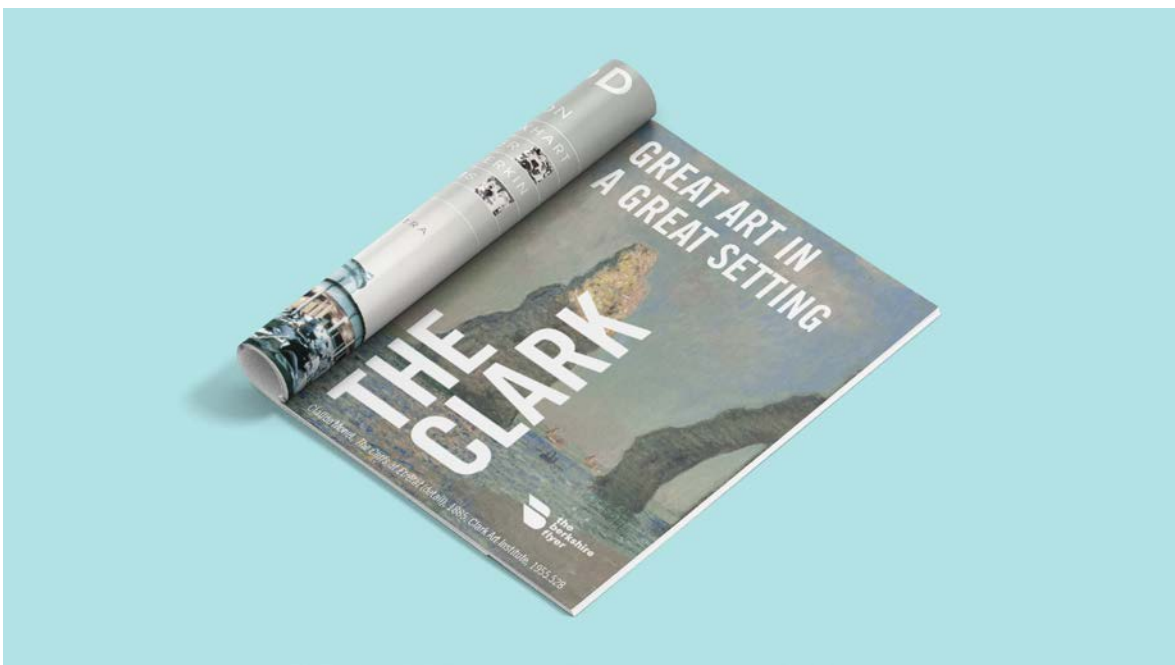
The Berkshire Flyer brand is a responsive. It allows multiple iterations of the logo and the identity which allows the audience to engage with the brand in a more fluid way.



*Berkshire Flyer Logo Phases*



*Branded Berkshire Flyer Ad Sample*



*Berkshire Flyer Brand Incorporated in a Partner Ad Sample*



*Berkshire Flyer Logo Incorporated on Ticket and Train Sample*

## 5.4 PROPOSED MARKETING STRATEGIES

Berkshire will operate prior to and during the pilot as the primary facilitator of marketing efforts. A Marketing Advisory Committee comprised of stakeholders representing various industry and countywide geography should also be convened to advise on the implementation of the strategies.

The extent of funding made available will play a huge role in the overall marketing strategy and reach. A range of different strategies will be utilized.

- Initial web presence (possibly through Berkshires.org) including regular updates that will act as an informational landing page for potential riders of the Berkshire Flyer
- Major social media presence
- Public relations/media relations efforts
- Branded eblasts to New York City audiences
- Branded print campaign in New York City metro areas
- Street kiosks
- Digital retargeting to New York City target audiences
- Native carousel campaign to New York City target audience

Additionally, existing marketing buys made by other Berkshire institutions could include the Berkshire Flyer logo and further leverage the marketing budget. Optimizing this campaign building up to the 2020 proposed pilot would require a budget of \$100,000 or more.



## 6. Identifying and Developing Public/ Private Partnerships

Public/ private partnerships that are crucial to support a pilot season of passenger rail service in calendar year 2020 are identified as:

- MassDOT to provide contracting services with Amtrak for the pilot service in Spring of 2020.
- A local sponsor to take the responsibility for operations and coordination.
- BRPC to provide administrative support for the last mile/ local transportation coordination.
- Collaboration by Amtrak and the identified private carrier for the seamless Berkshire Flyer shuttle service.
- City of Pittsfield to issue an RFP to establish car rentals at the Columbus Avenue parking facility. A letter of support from the Mayor of the City of Pittsfield is included in **Appendix B**.
- BRTA to provide train connector bus service to Berkshire Flyer riders enhancing multi-modal connectivity.
- 1Berkshire to collaborate with larger cultural institutions and tourist destinations, e.g. MASS MoCA, The Clark, Tanglewood to leverage marketing.

For the Berkshire Flyer pilot to be successful and provide a positive experience for patrons that utilize the new service, these partnerships are vital and must be created.

## 7. Next Steps toward Implementation

The goals for this study were to identify and evaluate the issues, benefits, and challenges to creating a seasonal rail service between New York City and Pittsfield, MA. The next steps toward implementation are identifying actions required to implement a successful pilot for seasonal passenger rail service in May of 2020.

### 7.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR A PILOT PROGRAM IN 2020

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Actions required to implement a successful pilot season of passenger rail service from New York City to Pittsfield, MA in May of 2020 are identified as:

- Secure funding for train operation, management and marketing for the pilot program.
- Identify and secure a local sponsor to take the responsibility for operations for the pilot program in Spring of 2020.
- Secure contract with Amtrak for a Pilot Program in Spring of 2020.
- Identify Pilot Program run period (at least two years; 2020 and 2021).
- In collaboration with Amtrak, secure the vendor (last mile shuttle service provider) to become Amtrak Thruway Connecting service provider for a seamless ticketing process for the riders.
- Implement the marketing strategy developed for the Berkshire Flyer pilot program in 2020.
- Leverage marketing for the Berkshire Flyer pilot with larger cultural institutions and tourist destinations, e.g. Mass MoCA, The Clark, Tanglewood.
- Develop a strategy for a website development and support for the Berkshire Flyer information.
- Provide the administrative support for last mile/ local transportation coordination.
- Secure vendor and parking spaces for rental cars near ITC (Columbus Avenue Parking facility and overflow parking at McKay Street Parking Lot).

The Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Draft Action Plan for a pilot service in May of 2020 is included in **Appendix A**. The Action plan is in draft form as the responsibilities for the implementation of the pilot program are being negotiated. The pilot service should run for at least two consecutive years. Reasonable last mile/ local transportation options, a robust marketing effort in partnership with local stakeholders and a dedication to achieving the highest level of customer satisfaction are key to the success of the Berkshire Flyer pilot service.

## **7.2 FINANCIAL PLAN AND POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

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Funding required to implement a successful pilot season of passenger rail service from New York City to Pittsfield, MA in May of 2020 and possible funding sources are identified as:

- Secure administrative, operating and marketing funds for a Pilot in 2020.
- Possible funding sources:
  - Massachusetts State Budget
  - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for transit operations through competitive grant program from MassDOT
  - Dollar or in-kind contributions from: private contributors; foundations; trade groups

**Appendix A:**  
**Draft Action Plan for a Pilot Service in May of 2020**

**Appendix B:**  
**Letter of support from the Mayor of the City of Pittsfield**

## Appendix A: DRAFT Berkshire Flyer 2.0 Action Plan for a Pilot Service in May of 2020

Implementation Actions	Financial Cost Estimates for a Pilot Season (twenty weeks)			Status: Initiated/ Completed	Schedule for Completion/ Collaboration				Lead Agency	Action Elements
					2019			2020		
					Feb - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Apr		
Secure Contract and Negotiations with Amtrak	NA								Senator Hinds Office; MassDOT; Amtrak	Identify Pilot run period; Secure Contract with Amtrak; Negotiate/ Finalize Cost; Secure Pilot train schedule & other logistics; Coordination with New York DOT & CSX.
Secure funding for Operations for the Pilot Service	Year 1	Year 2							Senator Hinds Office	Operating funds for the Pilot service; Possible funding sources:
	\$421,561	\$421,561	Gross Operating Cost							Massachusetts State Budget;
	\$185,000	\$185,000	Estimated Revenue							Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for transit operations through competitive grant program from
	\$236,561	\$236,561	Net Operating Cost							Responsible for coordinating with Amtrak; MassDOT and local stakeholders for the pilot program implementation;
Identify local Sponsor to take the responsibility for Operations for the Pilot Program	\$30,000	\$20,000	Administrative Support for Service Implementation						To be determined	Day-to-day coordination while the pilot is in service;
										Coordination with Amtrak and checking the ticket sales (collecting rider metrics); Coordination with marketing.
Secure Vendor for the Shuttle Service	NA			Initiated					BRPC; Amtrak	In collaboration with Amtrak Thruway Connecting services secure vendor for Berkshire Flyer shuttle service;
										Secure contract for the Pilot period;
										Create a ticketing service for the shuttle in Amtrak reservation systems.
Secure Parking Spaces for Rental Cars near ITC	NA			Initiated					BRPC; City of Pittsfield	Collaboration with City of Pittsfield and Car Rental Companies; Secure parking agreement
										Develop RFP
										RFP Solicitation
										Evaluation and contract award
Coordination for Last Mile / Local Transportation	Year 1	Year 2		Initiated					BRPC	BRPC to coordinate with Amtrak and local transportation providers for last mile / local transportation.
	\$5,000	\$5,000	Administrative Support							
Implementation of Marketing Plan - Landing webpage for Berkshire Flyer Information	\$50,500	\$30,500	Marketing	Initiated					1Berkshire	1Berkshire to implement the marketing strategy developed in collaboration with a marketing and branding firm Brigade;
			Information Webpage							Webpage Development and Support.
Leverage Berkshire Flyer Marketing with larger Cultural Institutions and Tourist	NA			Initiated					1Berkshire	1Berkshire to work and leverage marketing for Berkshire Flyer with MassMoCA, The Clark, Tanglewood and other tourist destinations.
BRTA Train Connector Bus Service	\$25,000	\$25,000	Operating Cost	Initiated					BRTA; BRPC	BRTA to identify funding for operations.
Launching of Ticket Sales for Pilot	NA								Amtrak	Amtrak to launch ticket sales for Pilot in Fall/ Winter of 2019
	\$347,061	\$317,061	Annual Cost required for years one and two of the Pilot Program of the Berkshire Flyer Passenger Rail Service							

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# THE CITY OF PITTSFIELD

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

70 Allen Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 499-9321 • ltyer@cityofpittsfield.org

**Linda M. Tyer**  
**Mayor**

February 6, 2019

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Mr. Matuszko,

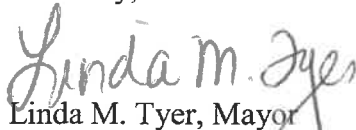
The City of Pittsfield is looking forward to the 2020 piloting of the Berkshire Flyer seasonal weekend service between New York City and the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center in downtown Pittsfield. As part of this pilot program we are willing to lease spaces in the City's Columbus Avenue Parking Lot for use by one or more rental car companies. We propose an arrangement that would entitle selected company(ies) to use the designated spaces from 5PM on Friday to 12AM Monday morning each week from the Friday before Memorial Day through Columbus Day (which can be adjusted based on the final decisions about the period of time the pilot is scheduled to run). Additional parking spaces in the Depot Street Parking Lot can also be made available, if desired, to support the Berkshire Flyer Pilot.

The current Columbus Avenue Parking Garage is slated to be demolished in 2019 and replaced by a surface lot with an estimated 140 spaces. A sample of the existing Parking Agreement used by the City is attached for your information. The fee for "Weekend Reserved" parking spaces will need to be established for Lot 7, Columbus Avenue Garage. Parking fees are set by the City's Traffic Commission and then ordained as part of City Code by the City Council.

If the Berkshire Flyer 2020 pilot moves forward, we would anticipate presenting a proposed plan to the Traffic Commission in late spring 2019 (after completion of the current phase of Berkshire Flyer work). Once approved, we would solicit interest from rental car companies (most likely in the fall of 2019) with the goal of having Parking Agreement(s) executed by early 2020.

If you need any further information, feel free to speak to Deanna Ruffer, Pittsfield's Community Development Director, who is representing the City on the Berkshire Flyer Working Group.

Sincerely,

  
Linda M. Tyer, Mayor

cc: Deanna L. Ruffer, Community Development Director  
David Turocy, Public Services Commissioner