

# Vision for the New England High-Speed and Intercity Rail Network

President Obama and the U.S. Congress earlier this year included eight billion dollars for High-Speed and Intercity Rail in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, making a truly unprecedented investment in passenger rail service. Recognizing the interdependency of our transportation systems, the New England states have come together responding to this challenge with a bold vision for rail in our region and commitment to work together to support our collective efforts.

## Expanding Rail to Support Economic Growth and Livable Communities

This New England vision of the future regional rail system shares the national goals of ensuring safe and efficient transportation choices that will seamlessly link our communities with an integrated rail and transportation network. The rail system will provide a foundation for economic competitiveness and promote livable communities through a network of High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail routes connecting every major city in New England with smaller cities and rural areas and internationally to Montreal. The fast and frequent rail service provided by this integrated rail and transportation network will promote energy efficiency and environmental quality by convincing people to leave their car behind while further enhancing movement of freight throughout the region. Our network will be created through integration of a fully developed Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor with the planned Empire Corridor improvements and the existing High-Speed Rail service along the Northeast Corridor.

## Decades of Collaboration to Strengthen New England's Regional Rail Network

For decades our states have successfully worked through the Coalition of Northeastern Governors

(CONEG) to promote a regional approach to our shared complex transportation issues. CONEG has long played a leadership role in promoting passenger rail service in the Northeast. The completion for the electrification of the Northeast Corridor in 2000 is a prime example of our successful long term advocacy for passenger rail. The development of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor will fill in the gaps of the region's network and be a critical element in achieving the Northeast Governors' goal to double passenger ridership in the northeast corridor by 2030.

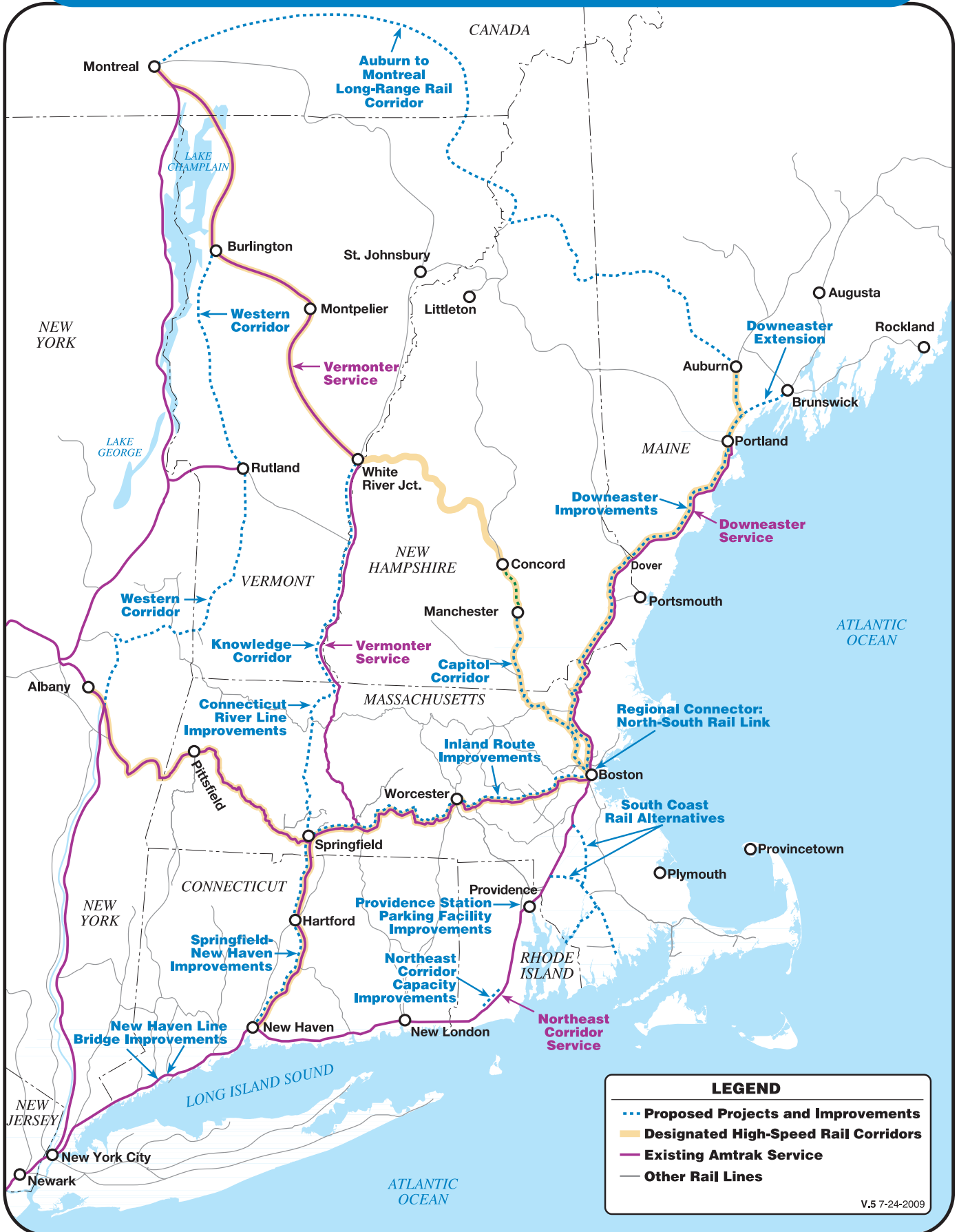
The U.S. Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan for High Speed Rail recognizes the need for incremental improvements in building the National High Speed Rail Network. The New England states are well-positioned to meet this need as a region with already-developed rail infrastructure. Steps are now underway to improve existing rail service while providing a foundation for New England's High Speed and Intercity Rail Network.

## A Vision for the Future: New England's Priority Projects

In the near term the New England states expect to advance several High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail initiatives, enhancing both passenger and freight service across our region.

- The Downeaster service which operates on a route included in the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor between Boston and Portland is a national model for the successful introduction of new intercity passenger rail service. The states along the Downeaster Route are working together to improve the infrastructure with the goal of reducing the travel time between Boston and Portland to two hours and increasing capacity to support 7 daily round trips. With our support, Maine will further extend the Downeaster service to Brunswick,

# New England Vision for High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail



Maine. This important connection will increase passenger rail access from Boston through to the mid-coast region, via a Maine-owned Rockland Branch, reducing congestion along I-295 and Route 1.

- The Downeaster Extension Project in the rehabilitation of approximately 30 miles of existing rail to Class 3 to support the extension of the Amtrak Downeaster intercity passenger rail service from Portland to Brunswick with a stop in Freeport. In Brunswick the Downeaster will connect to Rockland, via Maine Eastern Railroad excursion service on the state-owned Rockland Branch, and subsequently our island communities via the Maine State Ferry Service. The Downeaster Extension project will improve regional mobility, promote economic development and expand tourism opportunities along the entire corridor from Boston through to mid-coast Maine.
- New Hampshire's Capital corridor will create easily accessible passenger rail service for more than 500,000 residents of Southern New Hampshire with stops in the cities of Concord, Manchester, Nashua and Boston. The rail line will serve as the backbone of a technology and communications corridor extending up New Hampshire's Merrimack Valley, creating economic development and new, livable communities outside of Boston. More than one million riders annually are estimated to use the rail service in its first year, significantly relieving highway congestion on Interstate 93, improving air quality and lowering fuel consumption. The rail line will also stop at Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, creating a much-needed connection for tourists and travelers



Amtrak Downeaster Train

from across northern New England. Eventually, this service will extend north to White River Junction, VT and to Montreal fulfilling the vision of this designated High-Speed Rail Corridor.

- Vermont's Western Corridor will provide direct service down the western side of the state connecting Burlington, Rutland, and Bennington with Albany and New York City via the Empire Corridor.
- Massachusetts will return the Vermonter to its original route through western Massachusetts via the Knowledge Corridor. This effort, supported by the State of Vermont, is a vivid example of the ongoing collaboration of two states working together to improve service and increase the number of rail passengers. The Knowledge Corridor between Springfield and White River Junction provides connection between the Boston to New Haven and the Boston to Montreal legs of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor.
- Through Connecticut's leadership, we understand the importance of restoring the double track and replacing bridges on the Springfield Line that serves the cities of New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield in order to provide the foundation for the larger rail network. Expanded train service will provide key connections between New York City, Bradley International Airport and will allow further development of the inland high speed rail line between Boston and New York. This line, part of the Northeast Corridor as well as the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor, benefits from the significant amount of work already done by Connecticut.



- Providing the connection between Providence and Boston to TF Green Airport in Rhode Island via the Northeast Corridor as well as enhancing passenger service south of Providence will build on the long term transportation partnership between Rhode Island and Massachusetts. In addition, Rhode Island is working with Amtrak on capacity improvements along the Northeast Corridor in Southern Rhode Island that will permit bi-directional overtakes for intercity passenger rail, benefiting all users of the corridor while providing for future commuter rail infrastructure at Kingston Station.

## Planning Today To Prepare Us for the Future

As longstanding transportation partners the New England states understand that these initiatives must connect to a larger regional plan. The existing and successful master planning process for the Northeast Corridor provided a model for the needs of the larger New England Rail Network. The New England states propose complementary efforts to plan the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor within the next year.

Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont will develop corridor plans for the Boston to New Haven and Boston to Montreal segments of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor via the Inland Route through Worcester and Springfield. The Inland Route is also important as New England's largest freight rail corridor. With balanced resources and careful planning, the New England states are committed to grow both freight and intercity passenger rail on this critical route.

Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts will develop corridor plans for the northern half of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor, which extends from Boston to Portland and beyond and from Boston through Concord, NH, Vermont and terminating in Montreal.

The New England states, will seek funding from the new High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program to implement these corridor plans. These initiatives in New England serve to connect our re-

gion the greater rail network in the northeast through connections in New York City, Albany and Montreal.

Finally, on the Northeast Corridor we are working closely with Amtrak and all the northeast states to make improvements to the nation's original high speed rail line. The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan will define the intercity, commuter and freight rail projects and investment levels needed to improve reliability and quality of service between Boston and Washington.

The states of New England have long recognized the critical importance of rail as a vital foundation of our regional economic success. We pledge collectively to implement this future rail vision in a transparent and collaborative process of consultation and regular meetings. Our region as a result will remain a national model of successful interstate transportation cooperation.