



## Guiding principles of the Western Mass Rail Coalition

### Name

The **Western Mass Rail Coalition** (hereafter referred to as the Coalition).

### Organizational structure and website

The Coalition functions as an unincorporated nonprofit association.

The Coalition maintains and operates a website: [westernmassrail.org](http://westernmassrail.org)

### Mission

To advocate for the development, implementation, operation, sustainability and expansion of publicly-supported passenger rail services that benefit the residents of western Massachusetts.

## Coalition goals

To bring together representatives of passenger rail advocacy organizations from areas across western Massachusetts in order to further regional advocacy efforts.

To advocate for regional passenger rail transportation initiatives that involve Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and/or Hampshire counties in western Massachusetts.

To support environmental justice and climate change solutions by advocating for passenger rail planning and development.

To redress inequality of opportunity for people living in economically depressed urban and rural areas with inadequate transit options by connecting them to employment and training, educational opportunities, medical appointments, etc.

To broadly encourage connectivity between passenger rail and multimodal regional and local transportation services.

To collaborate with regional and statewide political and business leaders, and other statewide or national transportation advocacy organizations.

To promote transit-oriented development (TOD), regional economic development, and tourism, as it relates to passenger rail services in western Massachusetts.

## Coalition strategies

A coalition of rail advocacy organizations in western Massachusetts benefits by sharing information on policy, initiatives, developments and advocacy methods.

The Coalition offers a forum to interact with stakeholders and advocacy groups to share information and offer direction in support of passenger rail services in western Massachusetts.

The Coalition member organizations are, and will continue to be, the primary organizations responsible for rail advocacy in their locality or region.

The Coalition will support member groups' initiatives as appropriate.

The Coalition may develop and publicize policy statements, position papers, letters, testimony or other forms of documentation to disseminate Coalition views based upon the Guiding Principles as described in this document.

## Membership

The membership of the Coalition shall be open to citizen-led advocacy groups whose primary objective is to advocate for the development, implementation, and/or expansion of publicly supported passenger rail service in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, or/and Hampshire county(ies) in western Massachusetts.

The founding Member Groups in the Coalition are: [The Train Campaign](#), [Trains In The Valley](#), [Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop](#), and the [Chester Railway Station & Museum](#).

Each Member Group will designate one primary and, if desired, one alternate contact.

The primary (or alternate) contacts of each member organization (hereafter the Contact Group) constitute the coalition's decision-making body.

The Contact Group decides whether or not to accept applications for membership in the Coalition.

All member groups participate as full and equal members of the Coalition, sharing in both rights and responsibilities, supporting the Coalition's goals, and committing to assist with decision-making and the ongoing work of the Coalition.

## Governance

At a minimum the Contact Group will hold regular, scheduled monthly conference calls to encourage closer communication and coordination among member groups of the Coalition.

The Contact Group will encourage an efficient, transparent, responsive, and inclusive decision-making process.

Any member of the Contact Group may activate an established phone tree of Contact Group members, in order to expedite decision-making.

The Contact Group will seek consensus when making decisions; however, a majority vote of all Contact Group members may substitute for consensus in the event of disagreement.

Communications and endorsements from the Coalition must involve the input and agreement of all Contact Group members. A majority decision may only be invoked if consensus is not achieved.

When speaking for the Coalition, members should not advocate for policies or positions that are contrary to the goals of the Coalition.

When considering requests that the Coalition publicly support the work of nonmember organizations, the Contact Group will prioritize advocacy which furthers the shared goals of the Coalition, as set forth in this document.

The Contact Group speaks for the Coalition, and members of the Contact Group expedite communication in order to reach decisions as quickly as possible.

## Withdrawal from the Coalition

A Member Group may withdraw from the Coalition upon written notice from any person authorized to make such a decision for the Member Group.

## Disbanding the Coalition

The Coalition may be disbanded at any time with the consent of the majority of the Member Groups.