



Draft FY2026-2030 CIP Comment - RE: Rail Division / Location: Conn River Line / Project ID: CR 2205 6000 / CONN RIVER - KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR STATIONS (GREENFIELD & NORTHAMPTON)

1 message

Ben Heckscher

Thu, Jun 12, 2025 at 4:02 PM

To: MassDOT CIP Comments <masscip@state.ma.us>

With this email I am submitting the following comment regarding the Draft FY2026-2030 MassDOT Capital Investment Plan.

RE: Rail Division / Location: Conn River Line / Project ID: CR 2205 6000 / CONN RIVER - KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR STATIONS (GREENFIELD & NORTHAMPTON)

COMMENT:

I would like to request that MassDOT include funding in the FY2026-2030 CIP that would allow for the extension of the timber station platform in Northampton MA to a length of 400 feet.

Amtrak reported that in FFY2024 (ending September 30, 2024) that the station in Northampton had a total of 40,513 riders. This is a 16% increase in ridership above FFY2023.

The existing platform in Northampton, which is 153 feet in length, was cleverly designed to allow overflow passengers (waiting for trains) to stand on ramps leading to the platform, rather than on the platform. My understanding is this was done to reduce the cost of building a longer high-boarding platform at this station.

The time has come to expand this platform so that all waiting passengers can stand on the platform, and so that passengers can board through more than the two doors that are opened by the crew today.

As further support for this request I would like to point that —

(a) MassDOT had plans in place to construct a 440-foot station platform in Northampton as part of the Knowledge Corridor “Restore Vermonter Project” back in 2014. My understanding is that a full length high-level platform was not constructed at that time in an effort to reduce the costs associated with the overall project.

(b) Amtrak is now constructing a new 345-foot concrete high-level boarding platform in Brattleboro VT, a station where ridership in FFY2024 was 16,845 riders.

(c) CTDOT is now constructing a new 500-foot concrete high-level boarding platform in Windsor Locks, CT, a station where Amtrak ridership in FFY2024 was 35,458 riders..

(d) MassDOT has proposed constructing an 800-foot concrete level boarding platform in Palmer MA for the planned West-East Rail service.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ben Heckscher
Co-founder
Trains In The Valley
web | trainsinthevalley.org