Montpelier to St. Albans

Commuter Rail Feasibility Study

Public meetings April 13 & 14, 2016 Montpelier & Burlington

HDR

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AGENDA

- What's this Project?
- What Conditions allow for a Commuter Rail?
- Who Are We?
- What's Next?
- Questions

STUDY ORIGINS

Vermont State Legislature Directive: H.488, 2015, Section 12

MONTPELIER TO ST. ALBANS COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE; FEASIBILITY STUDY

- Determine the feasibility of implementing a commuter rail system within the corridor;
- Estimate the time horizon to plan for and design the service;
- Estimate ridership potential
- Estimate costs for operations and capital acquisition; and
- Identify any other general operational, capital, legal, and administrative requirements.

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STUDY MISSION

- Determine the Feasibility of Implementing a Commuter Rail System within the Corridor
- Evaluate the Financial and Operational Logistics for Operating Commuter Rail in the Project Corridor
- Develop a Framework for Implementing Commuter Rail Service and Time/Ridership Horizon for Service

THE TEAM

- **Vermont Agency of Transportation**
  - Policy and Planning Unit
- **HDR Engineering**
  - New England Office Rail Group
- **Stakeholders**
  - Transit Providers, such as Green Mountain Transit
  - Regional Planning Commissions
  - Rail Roads
  - Vermont Rail Council
  - State Legislature

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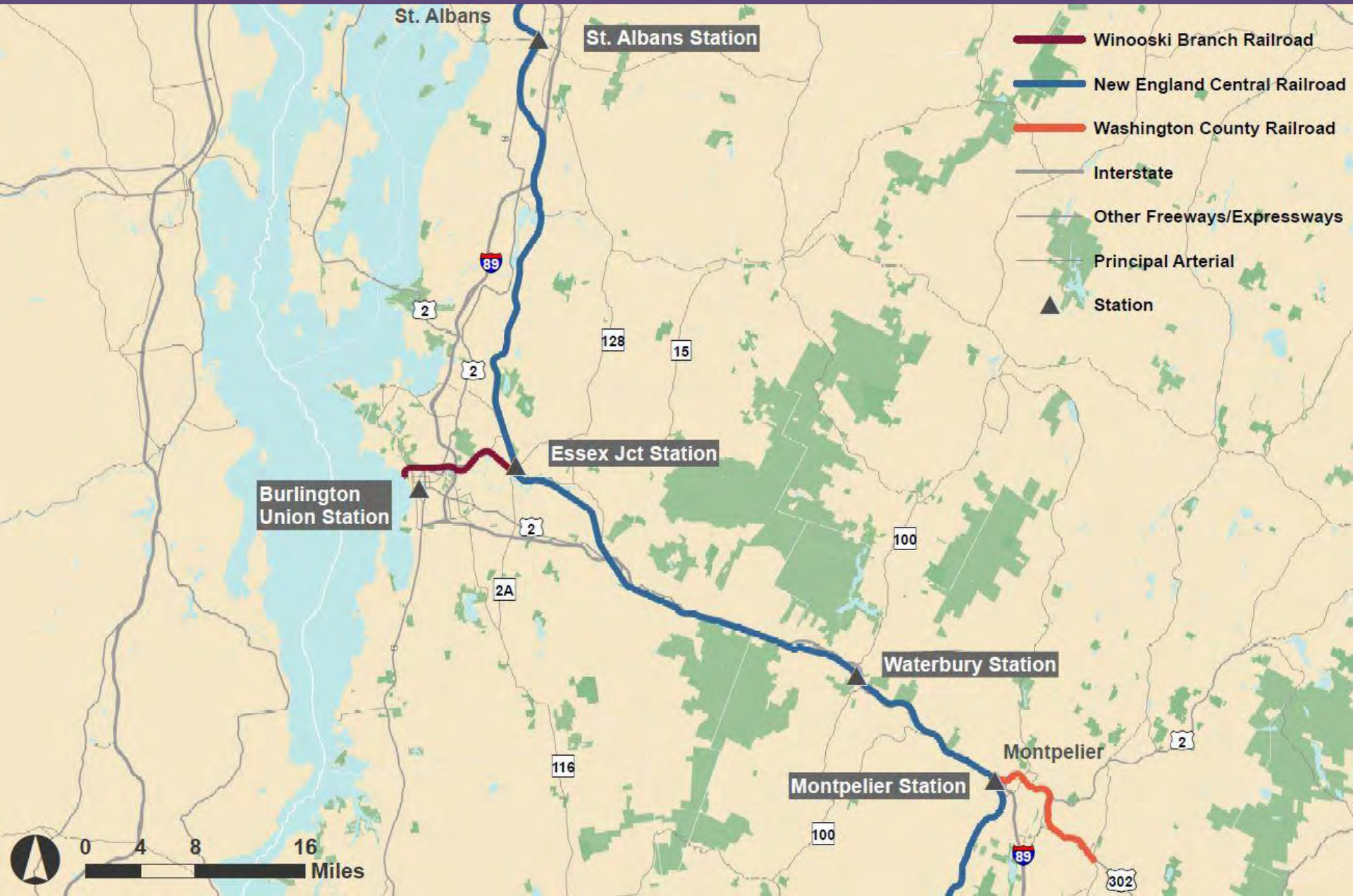
STUDY CONSIDERATIONS

- Existing Rail Corridors
- This Study will be Conceptual
- Focus on Key Attributes Rather than Detailed Program Development
- Connections from Essex to Burlington
- Station Location in Montpelier

STUDY SCOPE

- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Description of Commuter Rail System Attributes
- Commuter Rail Operations Analysis
  - Transit Demand
  - Cost Estimate and Funding
  - Implementation Considerations
- Stakeholder & Public Meetings
- Findings and Final Report (January 2017)

STUDY AREA

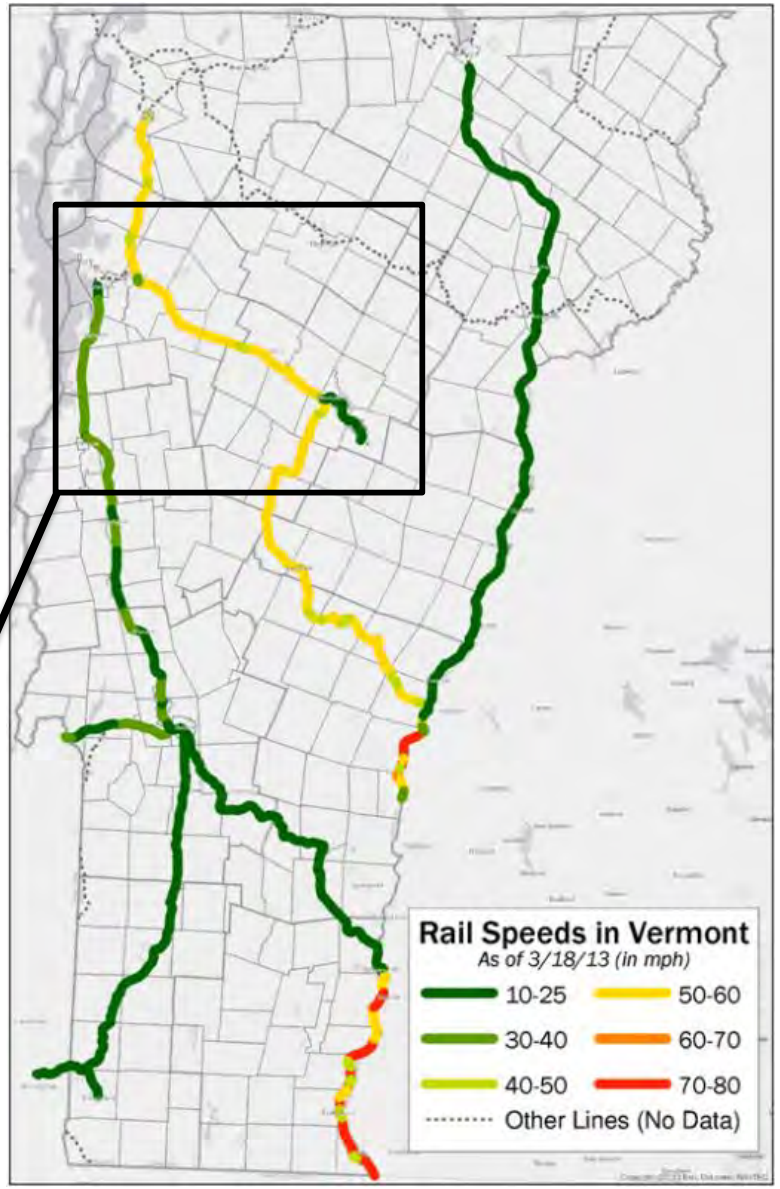

St. Albans
St. Albans Station
Winooski Branch Railroad
New England Central Railroad
Washington County Railroad
Interstate
Other Freeways/Expressways
Principal Arterial
Station
89
2
128
15
2
Essex Jct Station
Burlington
Union Station
2
100
2A
Waterbury Station
Montpelier
2
116
Montpelier Station
100
89
302
0 4 8 16
Miles

STUDY AREA

- **Railroad Corridors**
  - New England Central Railroad Mainline
  - Washington County Railroad
  - Winooski Branch Railroad
- **Stations**
  - St. Albans Station
  - Essex Junction Station
  - Burlington Union Station
  - Waterbury Station
  - Montpelier-area Station

STUDY AREA CONTEXT

- **Active Vermont Passenger Rail**
  - Vermonter Service
  - Ethan Allen Service
- **Existing Intercity and Commuter Bus**
  - Green Mountain Transit Link Bus
  - Private Services, including Megabus, and Greyhound



Study Region

Commuter Rail Overview

COMMUTER RAIL OVERVIEW

- **Provide Access:**
  - Connect Population Centers to Employment Hubs – *Bring the Commuter to the City, Not Act as a Distributor*
  - Alternative Transportation Mode in areas with Heavy Road Congestion and limited Parking
  - Provides Faster Travel than City Transit (Bus, Subway, Light Rail) but Slower than Intercity Service (Amtrak)
  - Stations Are Spaced a Minimum of 2-Miles Apart
- **Operating Characteristics:**
  - Share Right-of-Way with Freight and Intercity Trains
  - Systems Operate at Speeds below 79 MPH
  - Equipment and Infrastructure Must Meet Federal Railroad Administration and Federal Transit Administration Standards

PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

- Services Focused on Peak Arrival and Departure Times
  - AM Peak: 6:00 -10:00
  - PM Peak: 3:30 - 7:00
- More Reliable Travel Times due to Absence of Road Congestion and Less Weather Related Impediments
- Fares Typically Depend on Distance Traveled
- Most Stations Feature Parking and Covered/Enclosed Waiting Areas
- Connecting Services to Provide Distribution in Central Area

Where is Commuter Rail?

Where is Commuter Rail in the United States?

System Name	Metro Area	System Length (Miles)	Average Weekday Ridership
Metra	Chicago	487.7	290,500
New Jersey Transit	New York City and Philadelphia	398.2	295,173
Metrolink	Los Angeles	388	41,200
Metro-North Railroad	New York City Northern Suburbs and CT	385	298,900
MBTA Commuter Rail	Boston	368	130,600
Long Island Rail Road	New York City Long Island	321	337,800
SEPTA Regional Rail	Philadelphia	280	134,600
MARC Train	Baltimore–Washington	187	35,200
Capitol Corridor	Sacramento San Francisco Bay Area	168	4,500
New Mexico Rail Runner Express	Albuquerque–Santa Fe	97	3,400
South Shore Line	Chicago	90	11,800
Virginia Railway Express	Washington	90	17,900
Utah Transit Authority (the FrontRunner)	Salt Lake City	88	16,800

Where is Commuter Rail in the United States?

System Name	Metro Area	System Length (Miles)	Average Weekday Ridership
Altamont Corridor Express (ACE)	San Jose–Stockton	86	4,600
Sounder	Seattle–Tacoma	80	13,700
Caltrain	San Francisco–San Jose	77	56,700
Tri-Rail	Miami–South Florida	70.9	14,400
Shore Line East	New Haven–New London	59	2,200
Coaster	San Diego–Oceanside	41	4,900
Northstar Commuter Rail	Minneapolis–St. Paul	40	2,500
Trinity Railway Express	Dallas–Fort Worth	34	8,200
Capital MetroRail	Austin	32	2,800
Music City Star	Nashville	32	1,200
SunRail	Orlando	31.7	3,200
A-train	Dallas–Fort Worth	21	1,900
WES Commuter Rail	Portland	15	1,800

CASE STUDY: MUSIC CITY STAR

- **Metro Area**: Nashville, TN
  Population: 650,000, greater area: 1.75 million
- **Daily Ridership**: 1,225
- **Length**: 6 Stations, 32 miles
- **Service**: Monday-Friday with 5 Daily Roundtrips (6 on Fridays)
- **Annual Financial Support**: $13 Million

NEXT STEPS

- June
  - Study Advisory Committee Meeting
- September
  - Study Advisory Committee Meeting
  - Public Information Session
- November
  - Study Advisory Committee Meeting
  - Rail Council Meeting
- December
  - Final Report Completed
- January
  - Submission to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation

CONTACT INFORMATION

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