



Town of Chester, Massachusetts

Board of Selectmen

15 Middlefield Road

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Email: selectmen@comcast.net

413-354-7760

June 9, 2020

To whom it may concern,

The Chester Board of Selectmen, seek to convey on behalf of Chester residents, indeed all Hilltown residents, our strong support for the advocacy presented by our Chester Railway Foundation members and the Western Mass Rail Coalition to the E/W Rail Mass DOT Study Committee.

There is an urgency of now to maximize this once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity to provide transformative daily inter-community rail service between Springfield and Pittsfield. This service must include a stop at the Historic 1840 transport hub at Chester Railway Station. The key to enlightened interest may be taken from 'Commonwealth': the voice of all people, united for the common good.

The need for rail, where none currently exists, has been well-documented in recent studies. To create seismic change, we must change the analysis focus to a value and benefit model. A model where connectivity and sustainability drive investment in our future. Our world class rail infrastructure with safety management systems and positive train control, provides the framework for success.

In 1970, the last Passenger train stopped in Chester. During this period, economic depression brought on by the construction of the Mass Pike that bypassed the towns along the Route 20 corridor, created the perfect 'catchment' area of twenty-one surrounding communities of Chester Station.

Using rail mobility, our towns will emerge to fuel economic prosperity. Inland and upland migration will relieve density east of Springfield and produce a healthier planet, with reduced emissions, gridlock and stress. Cultures currently separated by 50-100 miles, will share improved quality of life, while creating our future Commonwealth.

We support the view of a phased hybrid alternative, one that recognizes two distinct East/West realities. One size does not fit all. Western Mass should no longer accept the inequity of access and expenditure of public funds. These goals can be accomplished, in the short term, at modest expense through deploying daily diesel multiple units between Pittsfield and Springfield.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



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Chester Station would need only minimal modifications to become operational. An automatic ticketing system, a small track-side weather barrier, and a 50' walkway are the modifications currently needed. A waiting room, handicap facilities, and station side parking are in place. This would be an immediate and substantial Return on Investment. We believe that this 'alternative' should be prioritized as Phase One.

The solution continues to be,

Fired up and Ready to Go,

The Iron Path Back to the Future.

We are asking for your strong leadership and support in order to achieve this goal.

John Baldasaro

Barbara P. Huntoon

Richard Holzman

Correction, On June 13, 2020 the Select Board office was notified that rail service had been suspended in 1955 not 1970.