



**BERKS
ALLIANCE**
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Future of Passenger Rail in the Schuylkill Corridor

Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®

Restoring Passenger Rail Service to Berks, Montgomery & Chester Counties

December 17, 2020



Project Consultants

TEMS

Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc.

LOTS OF STUDIES SINCE LAST TRAIN

- **Last Train to Phila June 30, 1981**
- **Since Then Many Studies Conducted**
- **Schuylkill Metro Study Estimated Cost in 1999 \$2 Billion**
- **More Recent Study Considered Tolling 422 with Rail as Alternative Means of Travel**

BERKS ALLIANCE



- **Founded 2015**
- **Collaboration of Berks County Anchor Institutions**
- **Focus on Community Development**
 - Ensure Safe, Clean & Green Environment
 - Emphasis on Improving Health, Wealth & Education Attainment
 - Assure Adequate Supply of Living Wage Jobs & Adequate Supply Workers to Fill
- ***www.berksalliance.org***

RESTORING PASSENGER RAIL TO BERKS



- **What We Studied**
 - **Financial Feasibility & Business Plan**
 - **Rail Line Capacity**
 - **Passenger Demand**
 - **Economic Impact**

WHAT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME



- **Changed Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors**
- **Greater Mobility & More Widely Dispersed Population**
- **Greater Congestion & Higher Fuel Prices**
- **Rail Technology Advances & Locomotive Performance**
- **Differentiator: Single-Seat Regional Rail Approach**
- **Key Point: Not Just a Transportation Initiative**

RAIL CORRIDOR MAP AND STATIONS



Great Interest in Wyomissing Station

PROPOSING ECO FRIENDLY LOCOMOTIVES

- **Goal: To Use Low Carbon Footprint Locomotive Equipment**
- **Eventually Powered 100% Renewal Energy Sources**
- **Powered By Electric & Clean Hydrogen**
- **Hybrid Locomotives Using**
 - **Overhead Electric**
 - **Green Hydrogen**
 - **High Capacity Battery Power**

79-MPH TILT TRAIN TO PHILADELPHIA WITH NEW YORK EXTENSION AT 125 MPH

- This run-through schedule is extended to New York is based on existing Keystone NEC timings east of Philadelphia.
- From Reading to Jefferson Station is about 23 minutes faster than the former 1981 schedule due to raising the speed limit to 79-mph with tilt.
- However, it skips the former stops at Birdsboro and Valley Forge Park.

	Miles	Time	
Reading Franklin St	0	0:00	Dp
Pottstown	18	0:18	Ar
Royersford	26	0:27	Ar
Phoenixville	30	0:38	Ar
Norristown Trans Ctr	41	0:48	Ar
Temple Univ	56	1:06	Ar
Market East/Jefferson	58	1:11	Ar
Suburban	58	1:16	Ar
30th Street	59	1:22	Ar
Trenton, NJ	92	1:53	Ar
Newark, NJ	140	2:26	Ar
New York, NY	150	2:46	Ar

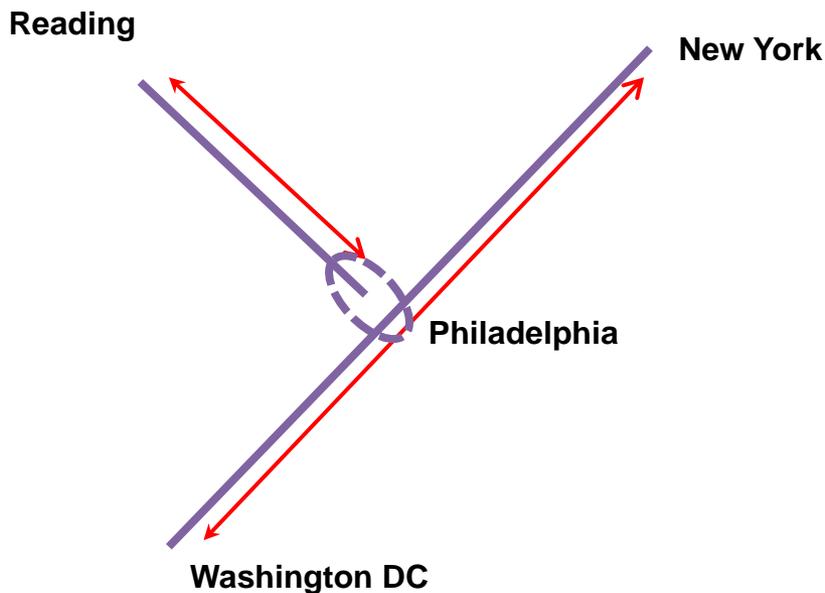
* Schedule is based on 7" Cant Deficiency assumption

THREE OPTIONS ASSESSED FOR THE STUDY

Commuter Service with a Transfer - 15¢/mile

Riders could transfer to the NEC on their own at Philadelphia, but the Reading service would only get 15¢/mile for the feeder trip and would not receive any portion of NEC revenues

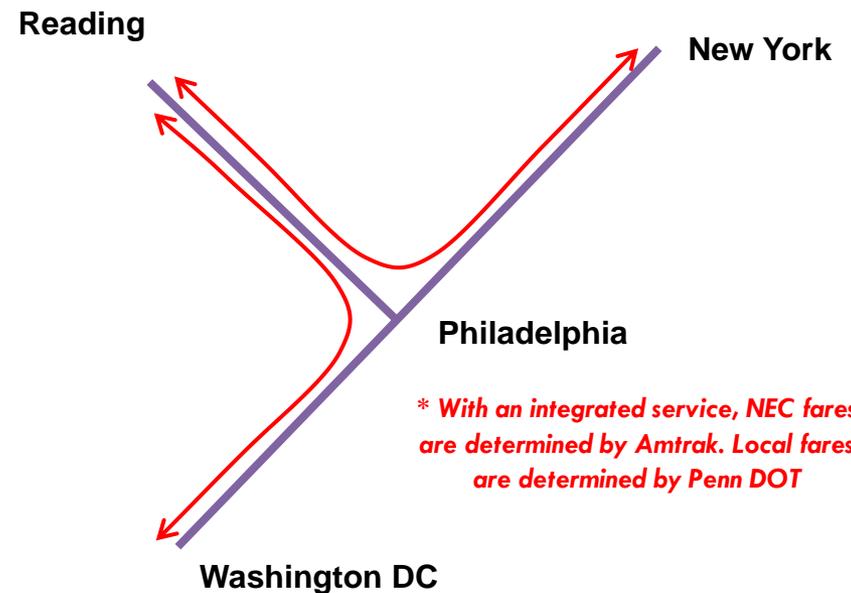
Option 1



Integrated Intercity Service - 20¢ or 28¢/mile*

With integrated ticketing, Reading service would receive (at a minimum) a mileage based pro rata share of NEC thru-ticketed revenues (28¢/mile or better.) Service and fare integration would also increase NEC connecting ridership

Option 2 & 3



CAPACITY ANALYSIS

- A detailed Capacity Analysis of existing and future freight operations shows that with **minimal** infrastructure improvements, the existing **double track** is capable of accommodating the proposed Reading to Philadelphia passenger rail service.
- Today the Norfolk Southern (NS) system has 8 trains per day each way that could grow to 12 trains per day by 2045.
- The route can accommodate the additional passenger rail 10 trains per day each way without any significant delay to NS trains.

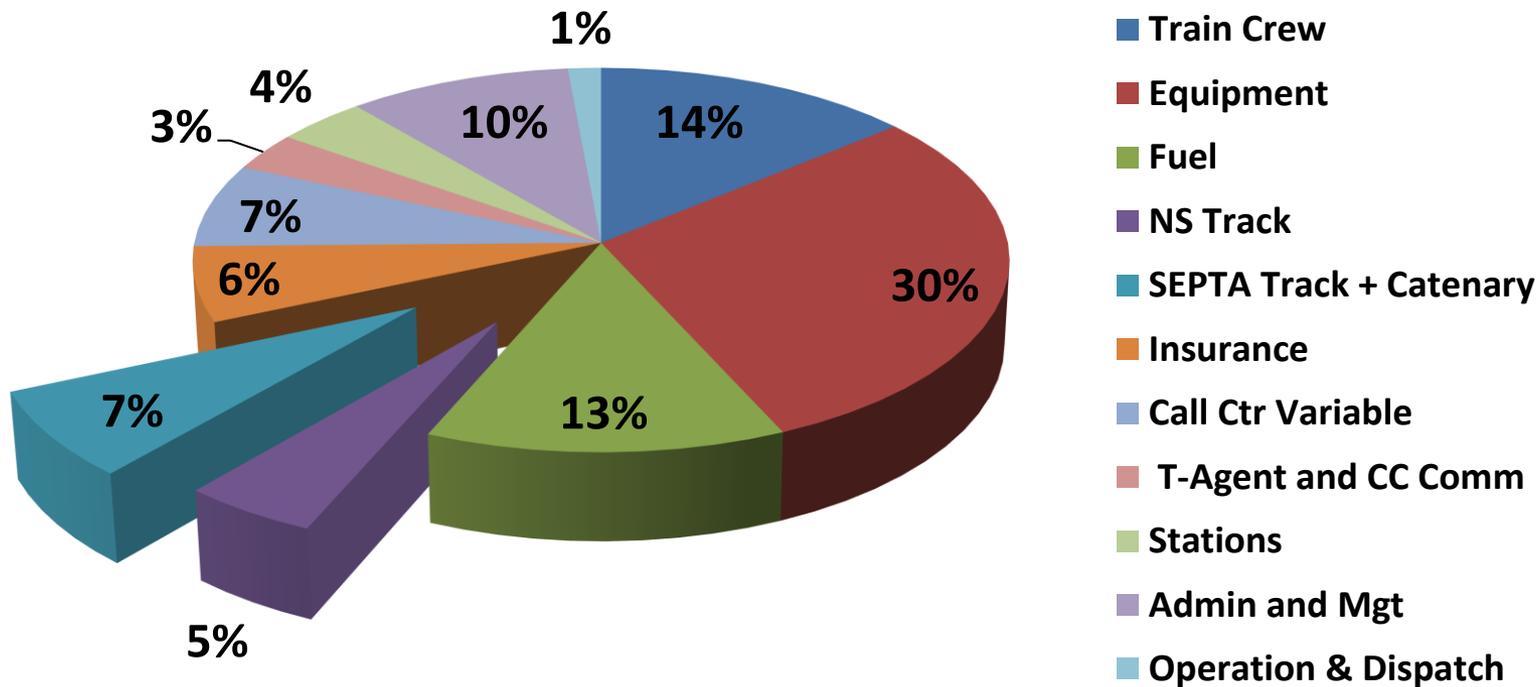
CAPITAL COST SUMMARY (\$2020)

Right-of-Way	Infrastructure	Equipment	TOTAL	\$/Mile* Overall
\$100	\$46	\$210	\$356	\$6.0

The route is 41 miles over NS and 18 miles over SEPTA.

- Overall costs are estimated as \$356 million:
 - **Right-of-Way** – \$2.33 million per mile, a \$100 million placeholder for the cost for acquiring a non-exclusive access to use and share the right-of-way belonging to Norfolk Southern from Norristown to Reading.
 - **Infrastructure** – \$46 million have been allocated for infrastructure capital including train maintenance base and servicing facility improvements, station platforms, grade crossing improvements and minor capacity upgrades.
 - **Equipment** – \$35 million each for **six trainsets** or \$210 million total.

OPERATING COST RESULT



TOTAL ANNUAL COST \$20.2 MILLION

\$68.59 / TRAIN MILE; 42% OF WHICH IS FOR TRACK AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR SOCIOECONOMIC PROJECTION

Reading-Philadelphia Corridor Only

	2020	2030	2050	Average Annual Growth Rate
Population	4,756,374	4,933,883	5,101,331	0.23%
Employment	3,001,997	3,305,147	3,804,989	0.79%
Per Capita Income (\$)	45,334	51,712	62,744	1.09%

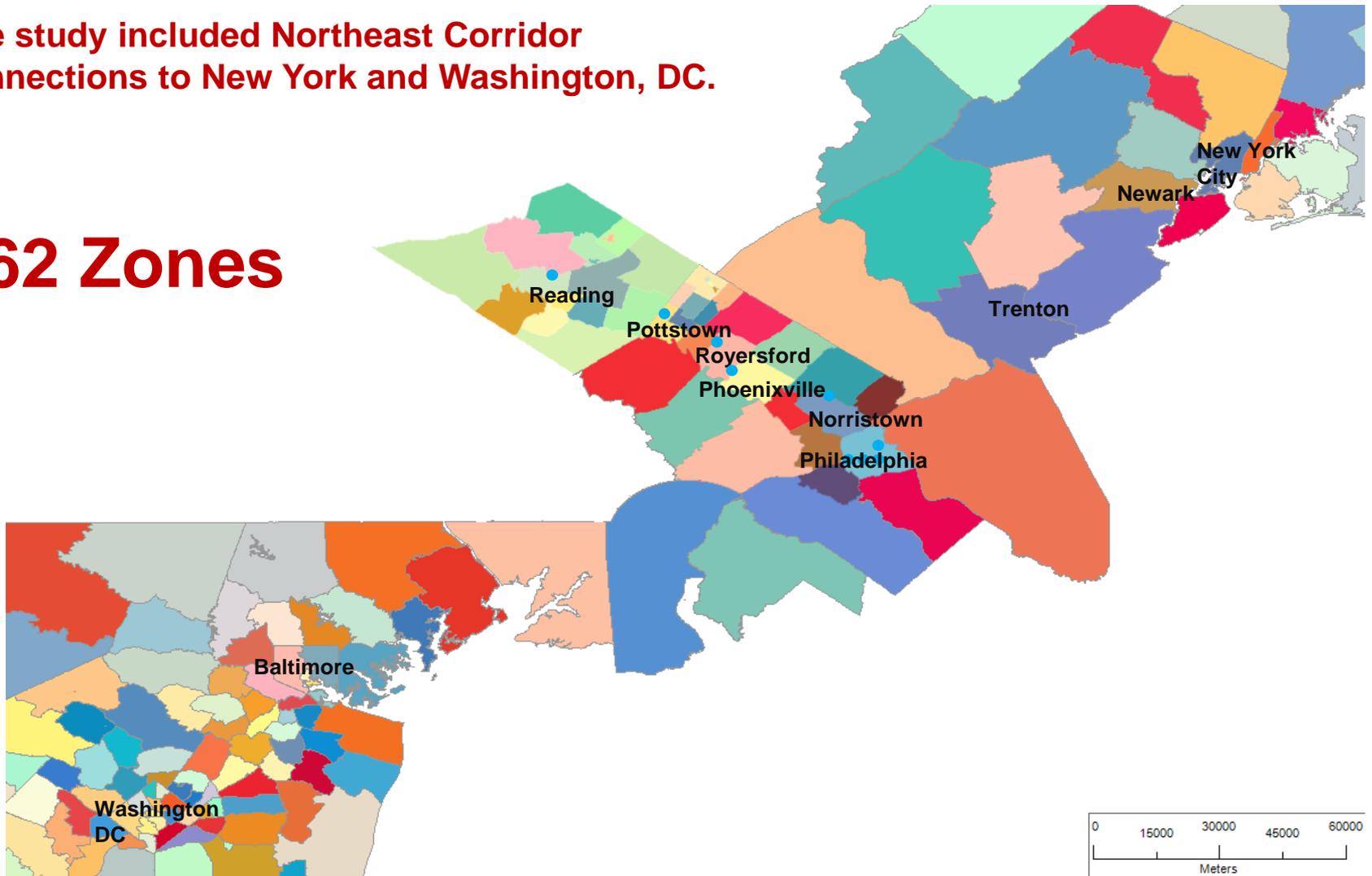
Reading-Philadelphia Corridor and Northeast Corridor

	2020	2030	2050	Average Annual Growth Rate
Population	31,514,046	33,228,464	35,777,734	0.42%
Employment	20,971,456	23,247,140	27,259,850	0.88%
Per Capita Income (\$)	52,413	58,729	69,622	0.95%

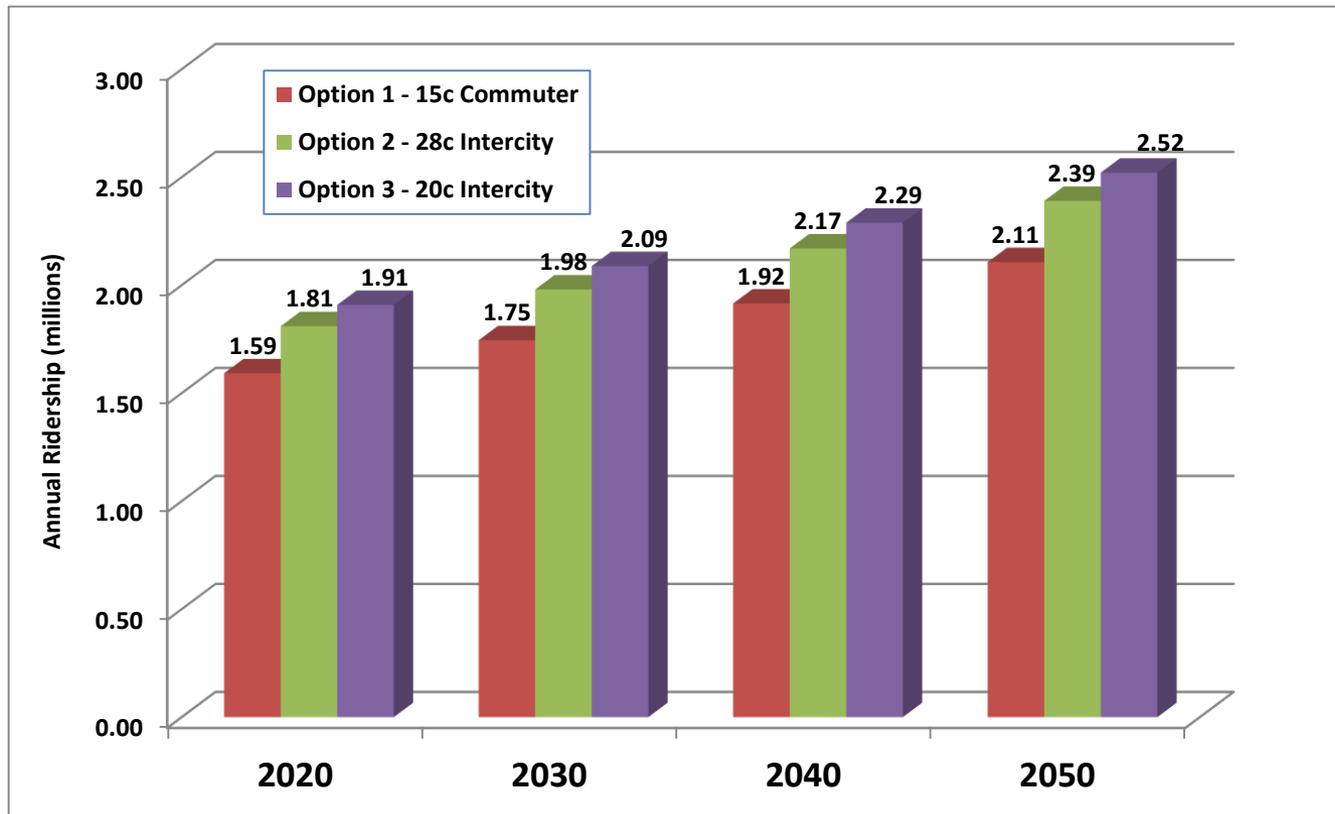
PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR ZONES

The study included Northeast Corridor connections to New York and Washington, DC.

162 Zones

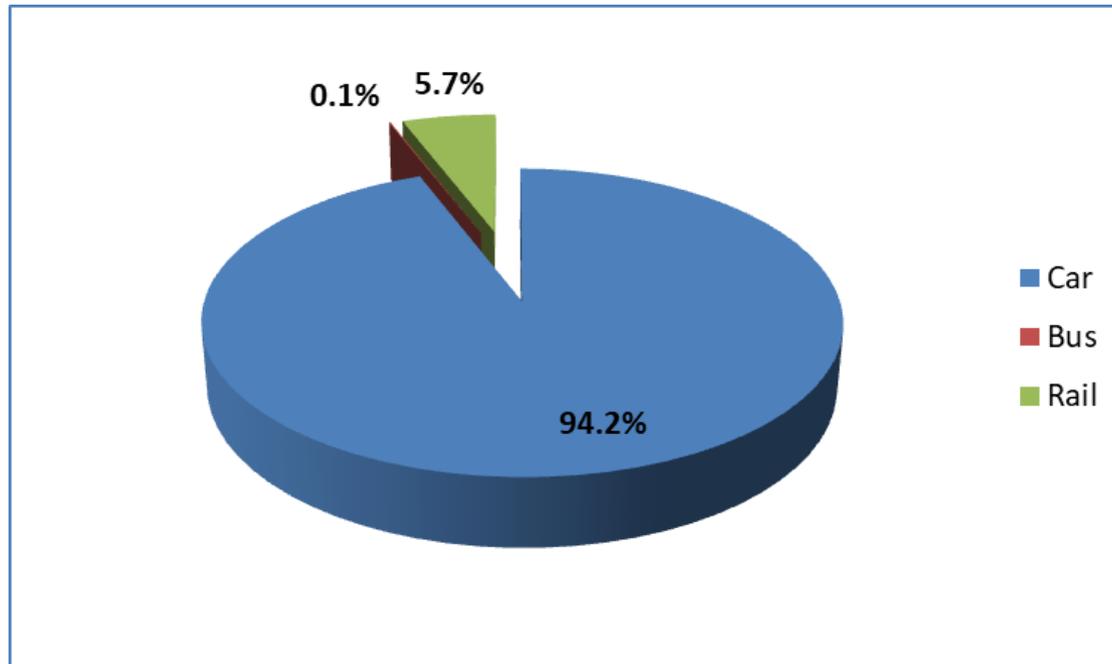


FORECASTED RIDERSHIP BY YEAR



With integrated service, connecting trips through to the NEC are increased by single seat rides, integrated fare structure and through ticketing.

READING-PHILADELPHIA AND NORTHEAST CORRIDOR MODAL SPLIT FORECAST (2020)



Rail achieves a 5-6% share of rail-eligible trips in the Reading to Philadelphia corridor.

PROPERTY VALUE IMPROVEMENT BY STATION COVERAGE AREA

Station Name	Property Value Improvement 2025~2054 (million \$)
Reading, PA	265.9
Pottstown, PA	103.8
Royersford, PA	33.7
Phoenixville, PA	99.0
Norristown, PA	117.0
Philadelphia, PA	456.9
Total	1,076.3

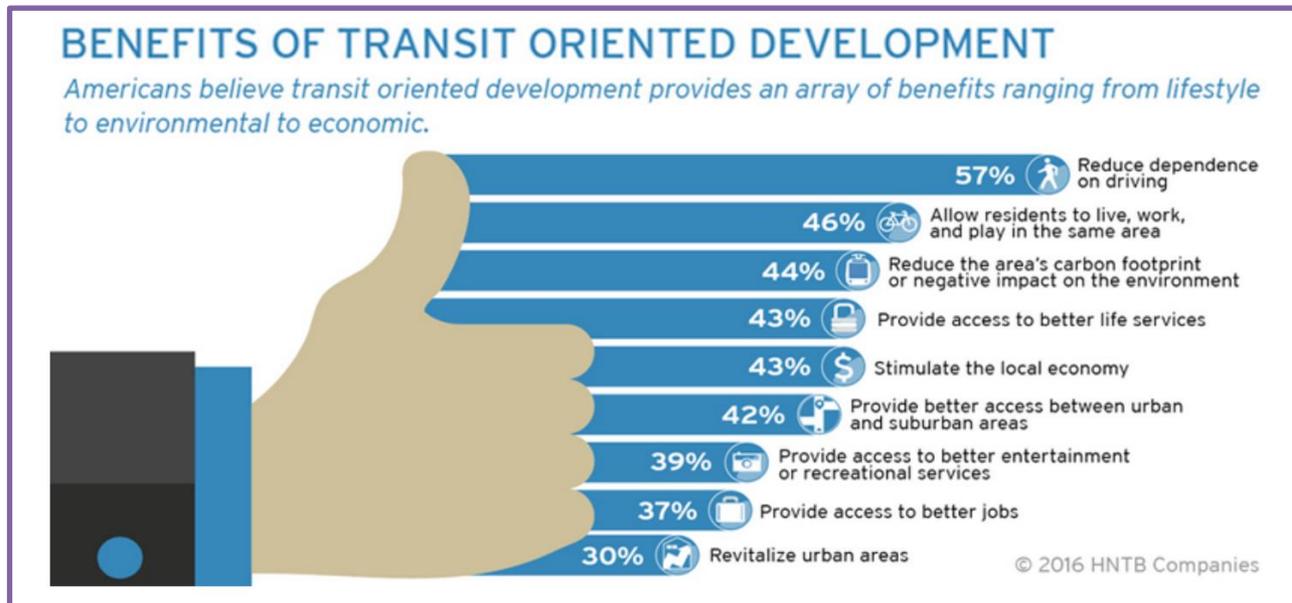
The Transit-Oriented Development for the five northern towns is over \$600 million.

VALUE CAPTURE

- **How Do We Fund Initiative**
- **Value capture** is a type of [public financing](#) that recovers some or all of the value that [public infrastructure](#) generates for private landowners.
- **TIF** – Tax-Increment Financing – Common Technique
 - [Public financing](#) method that is used as a [subsidy](#) for [redevelopment](#)
- **Collaboration** Among City, School District & County Required

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- **Transit Oriented Development** is the exciting fast growing trend in creating vibrant, livable, sustainable communities. Also known as TOD, it's the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high-quality train systems. This makes it possible to live a lower-stress life without complete dependence on a car for mobility and survival.



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GOVERNANCE & OPERATION

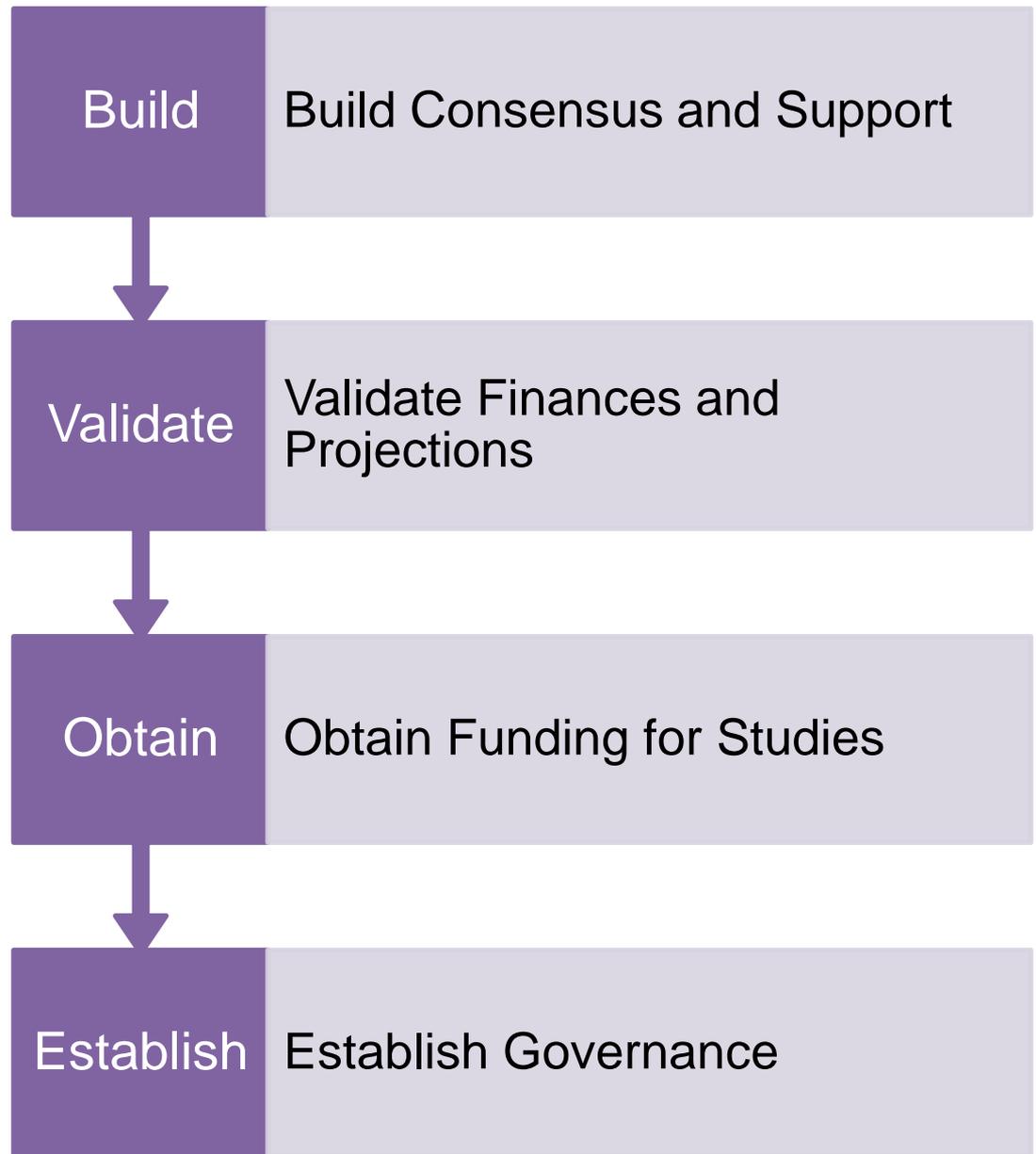
- **Anticipate a Multi-County Municipal Authority**
- **Authority Likely Hires Experienced Rail Operator to Run Day-to-Day**
- **Guiding Principle: Each County / Municipality Will Fund Own Infrastructure**



CONCLUSIONS

- **Strong case for developing the Reading to Philadelphia Corridor, with trains running into the Northeast Corridor to New York and Washington, DC.**
- **Key Issues: Negotiation with NS / Obtaining PennDOT and USDOT support.**
- **The economic development impact from direct and indirect jobs is very substantial. Over 28,000 person years of work.**
- **Property values and development are over \$1 billion.**
- **The expansion of the Federal, State and local tax base will pay for the project.**
- **More than just a transportation initiative ... economic development**

NEXT STEPS



DRAFT



Pennsylvania State Rail Plan 2020

October 2020



Download the Report: PlanTheKeystone.com

State Rail Plan Goals

1

Bring the priority rail system to a state of good repair and maintain it.

2

Develop an integrated rail system.

3

Support the future needs of residents and businesses.

4

Enhance the quality of life in Pennsylvania.

5

Assure personal safety and infrastructure security

6

Support energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, and resiliency

7

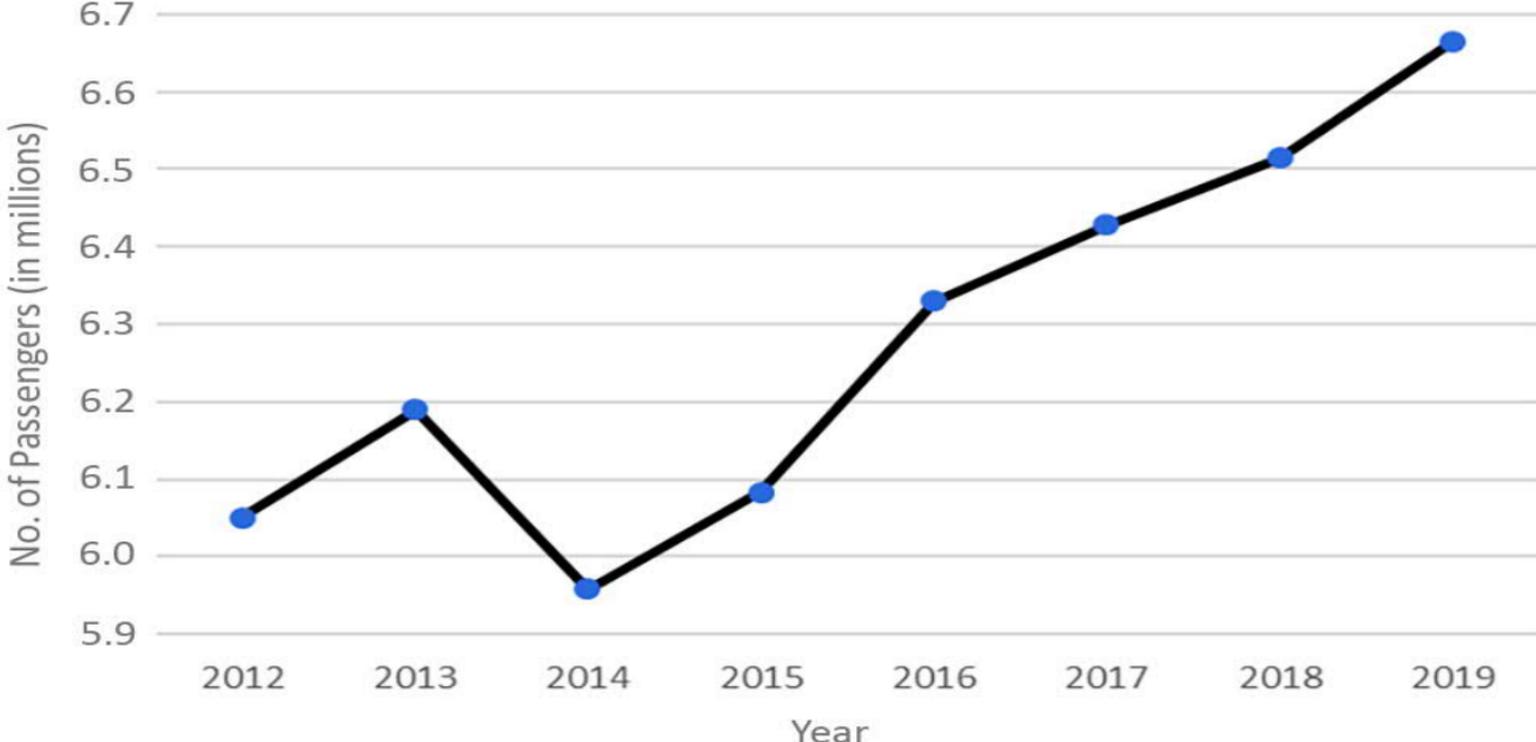
Identify stable and predictable funding

8

Build public support for rail system services and assets



Amtrak Passengers in Pennsylvania, Boarding and Alightings, in thousands





Passenger Rail Future Growth

- Short – term growth affected by COVID-19 pandemic but long-term outlook is positive
- Amtrak
 - Station Ridership in PA is expected to grow by 21% by 2025
- SEPTA
 - 7.3% growth in ridership by 2045 (DVRPC)



Passenger and Freight Needs (2021 – 2045)

- 319 Freight Rail Projects
- 127 Passenger Rail Projects
- Data gathered from PA Railroads, SEPTA, Amtrak, RPOs / MPOs, other neighboring states

Rail Service and Investment Program Summary (in Billions of 2020 \$)

Time Range	Passenger		Freight		Total	
	No. of Projects	Cost (\$billion)	No. of Projects	Cost (\$billion)	No. of Projects	Cost (\$billion)
Short-Range (2021-2024)	48	\$3.0	86	\$0.3	134	\$3.3
Short-Range (2025-2045)	45	\$1.5	84	\$0.2	129	\$1.7
Vision(1)	34	\$0.3	149	\$0.7	183	\$1.0
Total	127	\$4.8	319	\$1.2	446	\$6.0

(1) Projects not yet scheduled for construction

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- **Economic Impact of Restoring Service**
 - Increased Property Values
 - New Jobs
 - Revitalization of the City
- **Project Brings**
 - Affordable Tickets
 - Relatively Low Capital Costs
 - Ability of Corridor to Handle Both Passenger and Freight Traffic
 - And, Can Possibly Generate a Profit
- **What Needs to Happen**
 - State Rail Plan
 - Federal Funding
 - Norfolk-Southern
 - Municipal Authority Created
 - SEPTA and AMTRAK

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Be An Advocate for Rail Restoration**
- **Tell PennDOT and Elected Officials You Want It**
- **Encourage Creation of the Municipal Authority**



THANK YOU