

# Nashua-Manchester (Capitol Corridor) Project Development Phase

## Project Status Update to Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

**April 27, 2021**



# Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Objectives
- Background
- Scope
  - Update existing/future conditions
  - Confirm Locally Preferred Alternative
  - Environmental review, i.e. NEPA EA
  - Engineering and Financial Plan
- Schedule
- Next Steps

# Project Objectives

- Provide alternative to congestion on I-93/Rt3
- Improve bi-directional access to jobs & housing
- Environmental Assessment
- 30% design for 30-mile extension of Lowell Line
  - Four new stations and one layover facility
- Detailed and sustainable Financial Plan

# Background:

## Alternatives Analysis

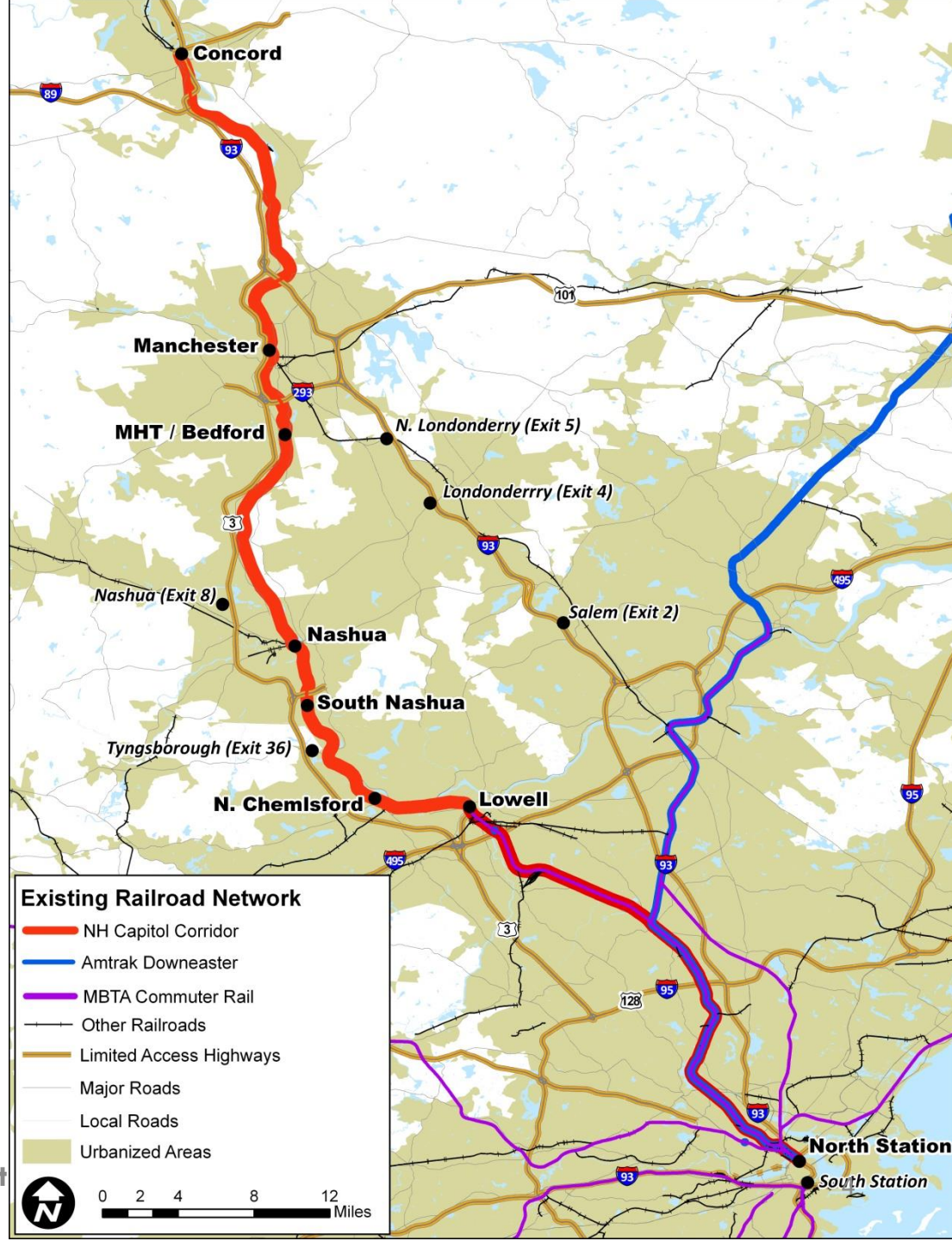
### 2014

- 6 MBTA Options
- 3 Amtrak Options
- 3 Express Bus Options

### MBTA Manchester Regional Rail Preferred Option

- 16 Manchester Trains
- 34 Nashua Trains

Nashua-Manchester (Capitol Corridor) Project



# Background: Service Options 2014

## Assumptions / Framework

- Extend existing MBTA service into New Hampshire
- Generally transparent to existing MBTA customers
- No impacts on existing Amtrak services
- No upgrades to infrastructure south of Lowell
- Eliminate 6 weekday MBTA deadheads
- Upgrades to rail infrastructure north of Lowell including
  - Upgrades to existing track to FRA Class 4 providing for maximum passenger train speeds up to 75 mph.
- Coordinated local bus service for some options



# Background: Preferred Service Option

## Manchester Regional Rail

- Extends Lowell Service to Nashua (34 trains/day) and Manchester (16 trains/day)
- Highest ridership and economic benefits
- Builds on 40 years of MBTA network extensions
- Interstate precedent is Pilgrim Partnership with RI



# Background: Conceptual Stations 2014

Station	Miles to Boston	Max Time to Boston	Min Time to Boston	Forecast Opening Weekday Boardings
Manchester	55.5	1:32	1:25	270
MHT / Bedford	50.1	1:24	1:17	280
Nashua	38.8	1:14	1:02	420
South Nashua	35.5	1:08	0:54	590
				<b>1,560</b>

Boardings forecasts reported in "New Hampshire Capitol Corridor Rail & Transit Alternatives Analysis (Parts A & B) Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives" – September 2014 Page 40 Table 2.13

# Pandemic Impacts on Service and Ridership

- Commuter rail was most adversely impacted
- Slowest of the MBTA services to recover
- April 2021 schedule restored nearly all trains but spreads them more evenly over the day
- Nashua –Manchester service planning is considering range of travel demand scenarios



# 2014 vs 2021 Base Timetable

## MBTA Lowell Line

Schedule	Revenue Lowell Trains	Deadhead Lowell Trains	Wildcats	Anderson Turn Trains	MBTA Train Miles	AM Train Sets	PM Train Sets
2013-2014 MBTA Timetable	44	6	6	8	1,452	4	5
April 2021 MBTA Timetable*	43	3	0	0	1,173	3	3
Change	-1	-3	-6	-8	-279	-1	-2

\*Schedule reflects MBTA *Forging Ahead* shift toward Regional Rail operating concept with service spread more evenly throughout the day, which reduces non-revenue “deadhead” train movements and requires fewer trainsets.

# Update of Existing and Future Conditions

- Infrastructure
  - Rail, roadways, bridges
  - Soils and foundations (geotechnical)
- Demographics
  - Population and employment
  - Travel markets
- Land Use
- Environmental

# Confirm / Update Preferred Alternative

- Manchester Regional Commuter Rail
- Stations
  - South Nashua (*Pheasant Lane Mall or Spit Brook Rd*)
  - Crown Street Nashua
  - Bedford/Manchester Airport
  - Manchester (*Depot Street or Valley Street\**)
- Layover (*3 potential locations in Manchester*)
- Need to confirm location of stations and layover

\* Valley Street location consistent with City of Manchester TOD Plan, September 2020

# FTA Environmental Assessment (EA)

- Coordination with FTA underway
- NEPA Class of Action expected to be an EA
- Coordination with MEPA for portion in MA
- Resource inventories
- Impact assessments
- Mitigation
- Outline of permitting requirements

# Engineering

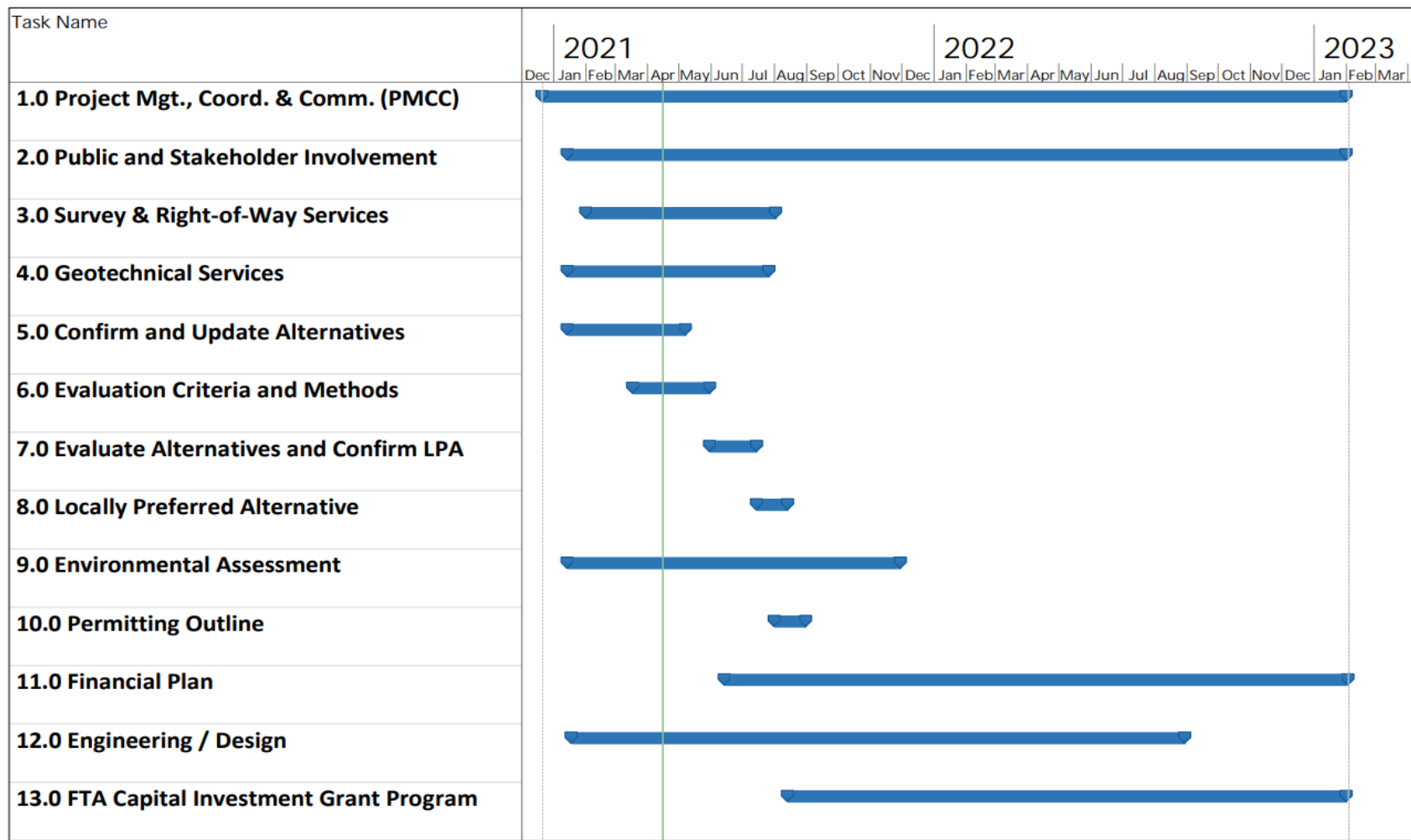
- Infrastructure/Systems engineering standards
  - Service plan drives infrastructure needs
  - Applicable elements of MBTA, PanAm, and possibly CSX
- Develop 30% level of design for Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
  - Track and bridge rehabilitation
  - Signal system and grade crossing upgrades
  - 4 stations and 1 layover facility
- Cost estimates and Value Engineering

# Financial Plan

- Key to project success
- Capital Construction
  - Non-federal share of potential federal grant
  - Value of in-kind contributions, e.g. MBTA trackage rights, rights-of-way/station property
- Operations and Maintenance
  - Potential public/private partnerships
- Service and governance agreement
- Revenue and cost sharing agreement
- Support for FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG)



# Schedule



# Stakeholder and Public Meeting Schedule

- Stakeholder meetings
  - Small groups / hybrid of in-person and virtual
  - April through July 2021
- Fact sheet – May 2021
- General Public Meeting
  - Format based on public health directives in effect
  - Target by November 2021
  - Notification via postcard mailer and website
- Website

# Next Steps

- Select preferred station location for South Nashua and Manchester
- Select layover facility location in Manchester
- Coordinate with key stakeholders
  - Municipal TOD plans
  - First mile/last mile station access
- Continue coordination with MBTA/MassDOT, FTA Region 1, and regulatory agencies
- Establish communication channel(s) for project information