**Importance of Maintaining New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority**

In 2007, Governor John Lynch signed legislation establishing the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority to encourage and oversee the redevelopment of passenger rail throughout New Hampshire with particular emphasis on the New Hampshire Capitol Corridor. That is exactly what NHRTA has done over the past decade. Concerns regarding traffic congestion, increased transportation demand, mobility and economic development were at the core of why NHRTA was established in the first place. None of those concerns have dissipated.

As directed, NHRTA, which receives no state or federal funding, has examined and studied options for bringing passenger rail to New Hampshire’s Capitol Corridor—the most-traveled corridor in the state. While the legislature has yet to move forward with extending passenger rail from Boston to Manchester, it is clear passenger rail has the support of the public. In fact, according to a [Public Policy Polling study](http://www.nhrta.org/n.h.-chamber-poll), nearly 75 percent of residents want passenger rail.

NHRTA plays a critical role in evaluating passenger rail expansion projects. And, further, progress is being made.

In recent years, the New Hampshire legislature voted to streamline NHRTA by decreasing the number of members of the board of directors, while also establishing an advisory board. In doing so, NHRTA can operate more efficiently, and its current structure is viewed more favorably by federal agencies seeking to invest in states with well-organized rail authorities. The legislature also approved legislation to study public-private partnerships, which could become a major funding source for all transportation infrastructure projects, including rail.

Perhaps the timing is not right for passenger rail now, but extending passenger rail from Boston to Manchester stands to have a profound and transformative impact on New Hampshire’s statewide economy on a much larger scale than any other proposed transportation project. The economic impacts should not be ignored.

According to the [New Hampshire Capitol Corridor Study results](http://www.nhrta.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/final-summary.pdf), the Capitol Corridor rail expansion project would generate 5,600 permanent jobs supporting 3,600 new residential units, 1.9 million square feet of real estate development, and $750 million in real estate development would be added to the state’s output between 2021 and 2030. In addition, rail expansion would create 3,390 construction jobs to build the real estate development generated by rail and, beginning in 2030, 1,730 jobs would be created every year thanks to the overall economic benefits of rail expansion.

In addition to the Capitol Corridor, NHRTA has statewide impact and benefit. The NHRTA has assisted with other rail projects across New Hampshire. For instance, the NHRTA has successfully advocated for the inclusion of Claremont in the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) feasibility study, which will provide more frequent and higher speed intercity passenger rail service between Boston and Montreal.

It is essential to have NHRTA in place to review, evaluate and examine all proposed rail projects in New Hampshire. To eliminate an unfunded Authority with oversight of a key transit option, would be short-sighted and would dramatically set New Hampshire back, despite the widespread support for passenger rail expansion.