

Downeaster Corridor



NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY



Federal Railroad Administration

Corridor Identification and Development Program Application

Federal State Partnership for Intercity
Passenger Rail Program

March 24, 2023

Application submitted by



NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
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Table of Contents

I.	Cover Page	1
II.	Corridor Summary.....	2
III.	Corridor Funding	2
IV.	Applicant Eligibility.....	3
V.	Detailed Corridor Description	3
1.	Corridor Characteristics	3
2.	Readiness	5
3.	Description of Past & Ongoing Activities	5
4.	Intended Service Operator.....	5
5.	Capability and Capacity of the Applicant	5
6.	Challenges Addressed by the Corridor.....	6
7.	Expected Users and Beneficiaries	6
8.	Potential Implementation Options	6
9.	List of Other Corridors Submitted by the Applicant	7
10.	Other Information in Support of the Corridor	7
VI.	Corridor Location	7
VII.	Evaluation and Selection Criteria	7
Corridor Benefits.....	7	
Technical Merit	9	
VIII.	DOT Strategic Goals	11
Safety	11	
Infrastructure Investment and Job Creation.....	11	
Support Resilient Supply Chains & Economic Opportunity	11	
Equity	11	
Climate and Sustainability.....	12	
Transformation	12	
	Civil Rights and Title VI.....	12

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
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I. Application Cover Page

Corridor Title	Downeaster Corridor
Applicant	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
Was a Federal Grant Application Previously Submitted for the Corridor?	<p>Yes. Grants awarded for various projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARRA, 2010, Downeaster Portland North Project • HSIPR, 2011, Downeaster MBTA Track Improvement Project • HSIPR, 2011, Downeaster Corridor Service Development Plan and NEPA Documentation • CRISI, 2019, Wells Area Improvement Project
Other Sources of Funding for the Corridor?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Annual operating funding of roughly \$10M in FTA 5337 SOGR; \$2M in CMAQ; \$2M in State</p>
City(-ies), State(s) Corridor is Located	<p><u>Maine</u>: Rockland, Newcastle, Wiscasset, Bath, Brunswick, Freeport, Portland, Old Orchard Beach, Saco, Wells</p> <p><u>New Hampshire</u>: Dover, Durham-UNH, Exeter</p> <p><u>Massachusetts</u>: Haverhill, Woburn, Boston</p>
Congressional District(s) Where the Corridor is Located	ME-001; NH-001; MA-003; MA-005; MA-008
Is the Corridor currently programmed or identified in: State rail plan, or regional or interregional intercity passenger rail systems planning study?	Yes: Maine State Rail Plan
Is the applicant working with other entities in support of the Corridor?	Yes: Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), Amtrak, CSX Transportation

II. Corridor Summary

The Downeaster Corridor between Rockland, ME and Boston, MA connects the people and commerce of rural, suburban and urban Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts to each other, to the economic center of New England, and to the rest of the nation’s rail network. The Amtrak Downeaster, which operates daily service between Brunswick, ME and Boston North Station, MA is an economic driver as well as a preferred transportation option to the region. The Downeaster Corridor builds and expands upon the success and achievements of Downeaster service by extending passenger rail service 56 track miles east to rural mid-coast Maine, benefiting the public by reducing congestion and increasing economic and employment activity along the route. The Corridor as identified includes existing and planned multi-modal connections from North Station to Back Bay and South Station in Boston, envisioning enhanced and simplified transfers between the Downeaster and Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC) and National Network. Other projects identified along the Corridor will reduce Downeaster travel time, increase reliability and frequency while making regional travel more available and accessible to residential, commercial and employment centers.

III. Corridor Funding

As highlighted in *Table 1: Downeaster Corridor Funding Breakdown*, the amount of Federal and non-program funding is listed to support Downeaster service operations.

A funding commitment letter from MaineDOT is attached. As noted in the letter, MaineDOT is committed to providing financial assistance, when available, to make service and Corridor improvements as identified in the Service Development Plan.

Table 1: Downeaster Corridor Annual Operating Budget Funding Breakdown

Federal Funds Received to Support Eligible Activities:	
FHWA CMAQ Funds (converted to FTA 5307)	\$ 2,000,000
FTA Formula 5337 Funds	\$ 10,000,000
Non-Federal Funds Received to Support Eligible Activities:	
Maine DOT:	\$ 2,000,000
Station Community In-Kind Contribution:	\$ 500,000

No federal funding tied to this project must be spent by a certain date. FTA formula funding has been used by NNEPRA for a range of activities including planning, construction, and state of good repair projects since 2001. As outlined in statute (23 USC § 149) NNEPRA is eligible to use CMAQ funds for expenses once converted into FTA’s 5307 program.

NNEPRA has applied for and has been awarded a number of federal grants to complete Downeaster Corridor and Service improvement projects, listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Downeaster Corridor Project Funding Breakdown

	Cost	Project Description	Primary Funder
1999-2001:	\$60M	Rehabilitation of 78 miles of freight mainline (FML) to initiate and support Downeaster service with 4 daily Downeaster round-trips Portland-Boston	FTA
2006-2007:	\$6M	Capacity project on FML to support 5 th daily Downeaster round-trip Portland-Boston	FTA
2010-2015:	\$38.3M	Downeaster Expansion Project rehabilitates 30 miles of freight track between Portland and Brunswick to extend 3 daily Downeaster round-trips to Brunswick.	FRA-ARRA
2011-2015:	\$26M	Four miles of double track capacity added to MBTA Haverhill Line to improve Downeaster reliability.	FRA-ARRA/HSIPR
2012:	\$12M	Train layover facility constructed in Brunswick, ME to service Downeaster trainsets.	MaineDOT/FRA
2017:	\$12M	Four miles of double-track capacity added to FML to support additional Downeaster Portland-Brunswick frequencies.	FTA
2021-2024:	\$23M	Wells Area Improvement Project adds 6 miles double track to FML and adds second passenger platform to improve Downeaster reliability and add a daily Downeaster round trip Wells-Brunswick.	FRA-FY19 CRISI /MaineDOT

IV. Applicant Eligibility

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, as established in Maine Statute ([Title 5, section 12004-F, subsection 16](#)) is a body both corporate and politic in the State established for the general purpose of promoting passenger rail service and is authorized to take all actions that are reasonably necessary to initiate, establish or reinstate regularly scheduled passenger rail service between points within this State and points within and outside this State.

V. Detailed Corridor Description

1. Corridor Characteristics

The Amtrak Downeaster makes 5 round-trips daily between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA serving 12 stations in rural, suburban, and urban communities including Brunswick, Freeport, Portland, Old Orchard Beach, Saco and Wells in Maine; Dover, Durham-UNH, and Exeter in New Hampshire; Haverhill, Woburn and Boston, in Massachusetts. Amtrak operates the Downeaster under agreement with NNEPRA at speeds up to 79 mph along 143-miles of track owned by Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), CSX Transportation and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The current trip time between Brunswick and Boston North Station is 3 hours and 20 minutes. The projected travel time between Brunswick and Rockland is two hours. The Downeaster transports approximately a half million riders annually representing a wide range of demographics and passenger types and serving a number of travel markets including commuters, students, medical patients, event goers, and tourists. Approximately 80% of Downeaster riders travel to or from Boston.

The Downeaster Corridor includes the existing Downeaster route and extends approximately 56 track miles east of Brunswick along the Maine-owned Rockland Branch in anticipation of new passenger rail service with stations in Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland, ME. These rural communities are key to Maine tourism and industrial economies yet transportation access is significantly constrained in the summer months by an extremely congested Route 1 and lack public transportation to Brunswick, the nearest service center.

Additionally, the Downeaster Corridor incorporates Back Bay Station and South Station in Boston to highlight multi-modal transfer options, such as subway, bus and rideshare, available to connect Downeaster riders to the Amtrak NEC and National Network. The Downeaster is the only Amtrak train serving North Station in Boston; all other Amtrak routes serve Boston's Back Bay and South Station. The Downeaster Corridor seeks to streamline the subway, bus and rideshare transfers between stations through increased transit options, signage and technology enhancements.

NNEPRA has identified [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#) with projects proposed to be developed along the Downeaster Corridor to include:

- The relocation of Portland Station from the Mountain Branch to the freight main line to eliminate a 15-minute reverse move now required to access the existing station and provide significantly improved pedestrian access to major employment and medical centers. (Projected cost estimate: \$30M-\$50M)
- The addition of a new Downeaster station in West Falmouth, ME located adjacent to Exit 53 of I-95 is optimally positioned to make the Downeaster more accessible for residents of rural and suburban communities presently underserved in western Maine along the I-95 corridor. (Projected cost estimate: \$10M-\$15M)
- Technology and communication improvements to streamline the transfers between North Station and Back Bay and South Station in Boston for passengers connecting to the Amtrak NEC and National Network trains. (Projected cost estimate: \$2M-\$5M)
- The potential for communication and signal upgrades and bridge replacements on the Rockland Branch to support regularly scheduled passenger rail service. (Projected cost estimate: \$100M-\$200M)
- The installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) on the CSX portion of the Downeaster Corridor to provide opportunities to increase Downeaster frequency and reduce travel time. CSX, in partnership with Amtrak, will install PTC on the CSX-owned portion of the Corridor in 2025. (Projected cost estimate: \$100M)
- Yet to be prioritized capacity and infrastructure improvements necessary to support additional Downeaster frequencies and intermodal connections which will be further evaluated in the Service Development Plan.

The elements identified in the [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#) are included in a [letter agreement](#) between NNEPRA and CSX which was developed during the CSX acquisition of Pan Am Railways.

2. Readiness

The NNEPRA Board of Directors has adopted the improvements identified in the [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#). These improvements are included in the draft [Maine State Rail Plan](#), expected to be finalized in 2023. The MaineDOT has provided funding to commence planning and NEPA for the Portland Station Relocation and West Falmouth Station projects. NNEPRA plans to update the Downeaster Service Development Plan beginning in 2023.

NNEPRA, in partnership with MaineDOT, plans to sponsor a passenger rail pilot program to provide 3 daily round-trips between Brunswick and Rockland. The pilot is expected to be operated by Amtrak using self-propelled rail cars owned by Midcoast Railservice, Inc., the freight operator on the Rockland Branch. The pilot will help evaluate demand for regularly scheduled service for residents, visitors, workers at Bath Iron Works (Maine's largest employer) to inform future infrastructure investment needs and service levels.

3. Description of Past & Ongoing Activities

Passenger rail service on the Downeaster Corridor was restored with four daily round trips between Portland, ME and Boston North Station, MA in 2001 after a 30-year hiatus. NNEPRA managed an extensive \$60M rehabilitation of the freight main line between NH and Portland, ME to support passenger operations. A series of additional improvement projects have been managed by NNEPRA since that time to reduce travel time (2006) and add a fifth daily round-trip (2007). NNEPRA completed the \$38M rehabilitation of 30-miles of freight line from Portland to Brunswick, ME (2012), expanding Downeaster passenger service to the west end of the Rockland Branch connection in Brunswick.

The [Downeaster Service Development Plan](#) completed in 2016 included a number of initiatives which have been completed or are underway. These include the construction of a train layover servicing facility in Brunswick in 2016 and construction of a 2-mile passing siding at Royal Junction which increased daily round trips to Brunswick in 2019. Currently underway, the Wells Area Improvement Project includes a 6-mile extension to the existing passing siding in Wells and the addition of a second platform at Wells Station, which will support the operation of a 6th daily Downeaster round trip between Brunswick and Wells. The [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#) are included in the 2023 update to the [Maine State Rail Plan](#) and are expected to be included in a pending update to the Downeaster Service Development Plan. They are also included in long-range transportation planning studies such as [Connect 2045](#) and [Transit Tomorrow](#) for the greater Portland Region published by PACTS (the Metropolitan Planning Organization).

4. Intended Service Operator

Amtrak will remain the operator of the Downeaster service between Brunswick to Boston, and it is anticipated that Amtrak will operate any connecting services between Brunswick and Rockland. Multi-modal transfers between North Station and Back Bay and South Station will likely be operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and other Boston-based transit providers.

5. Capability and Capacity of the Applicant

NNEPRA is authorized by Maine Statute to fund and manage passenger rail service improvements and has successfully completed many projects over the past 25 years. Projects will continue to be funded in partnership with railroad operating partners and the MaineDOT.

NNEPRA employs an Executive Director and Deputy Director to oversee organization management and strategic planning, a Director of Policy and Administration to manage compliance with federal regulations, a Special Projects Manager to coordinate project design and delivery, a Marketing Director to drive ridership and revenue along the Corridor, and a Passenger Services Manager to oversee service delivery. In addition, NNEPRA employs financial and administrative personnel and seeks contractor support as necessary.

The NNEPRA Board of Directors, appointed by the Governor of Maine, works with staff to establish financial and operational performance goals for the Downeaster service related to ridership, revenue, customer satisfaction and to manage the overall operation of the service.

NNEPRA has significant experience, over the past 25 years, developing and managing service and infrastructure improvement projects within guidelines and specifications required by federal funding partners and a long history of delivering projects. NNEPRA-managed projects include the rehabilitation of the freight line needed to establish Boston-Portland Downeaster passenger service in 2001 and then expand it to Brunswick in 2012, various capacity projects to increase frequency and improve reliability along the Corridor, the construction of maintenance facilities, and currently the addition of a passenger platform in Wells. Major projects managed by NNEPRA are highlighted in Table 2 in the Funding section of this application.

6. Challenges Addressed by the Corridor

Downeaster Service has connected the communities of rural Maine and New Hampshire with each other and Boston, the economic center of New England, since 2001 and has been a catalyst for economic growth. The Downeaster Corridor builds on that success by expanding sustainable rail transportation to rural underserved communities and key employment centers, mitigating congestion and improving safety along heavily travelled segments of Route 1 and I-95 and beyond. The Corridor supports connectivity to new and existing transit services and improves integration to the national rail transportation system.

7. Expected Users and Beneficiaries

The Downeaster Corridor serves a wide-ranging and diverse demographic and customer base including frequent commuters, business travelers, college students, medical patients, shoppers, cultural and sporting event-goers, tourists and those simply visiting family and friends. NNEPRA will continue to deploy strategic marketing programs and pricing strategies to increase awareness and utilization of passenger rail service along the Corridor.

8. Potential Implementation Options

Downeaster Corridor projects and improvements can be implemented in phases.

The relocation of Portland Station and the addition of West Falmouth Station are priority projects being pursued in tandem to increase ridership and revenue on the existing Downeaster service.

In partnership with the MaineDOT, NNEPRA plans to sponsor a pilot program on the Rockland Branch in 2024 to further evaluate service needs and infrastructure improvements needed.

The Wells Area Improvement Project is underway. The siding extension and second platform construction, as well as the installation of PTC on the FML, are expected to be completed by 2025. A sixth daily Downeaster round-trip between Brunswick and Wells, ME is expected to be implemented following completion of both work elements.

NNEPRA is coordinating with MassDOT, MBTA and Amtrak to streamline transfers between stations in Boston. Upon completion of the installation of PTC on the CSX-owned portion of the Corridor, opportunities to reduce travel time and add frequencies throughout the Corridor will be explored.

9. List of Other Corridors Submitted by the Applicant

The Downeaster Corridor is the only application being submitted by NNEPRA.

10. Other Information in Support of the Corridor

Attached are letters of support from Amtrak, NNEPRA's operating partner, host railroad CSX, and Massachusetts DOT as well as a letter from MaineDOT expressing support and funding.

VI. Corridor Location

A [Downeaster Corridor Map](#) is included as attachment 2. The Downeaster Corridor includes the existing Downeaster route and extends approximately 56 track miles east of Brunswick along the Maine-owned Rockland Branch in anticipation of new passenger rail service with stations in Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland, ME. Additionally, the Downeaster Corridor incorporates Back Bay Station and South Station in Boston to highlight multi-modal transfer options, such as subway, bus and rideshare, available to connect Downeaster riders to the Amtrak NEC and National Network.

VII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The Downeaster Corridor meets the Program Evaluation and Selection Criteria.

Corridor Benefits

A. Downeaster Corridor ridership, revenue, investment and operating fund requirements

The existing service on the Downeaster Corridor transports approximately 500,000 riders per year and generates approximately \$10M in ticket revenue. Expansion and improvement of the Corridor is expected to increase annual Downeaster ridership by 34%. Downeaster operating and maintenance expenses are covered by a combination of ticket revenues, FTA formula funds and MaineDOT funds. NNEPRA anticipates seeking FRA discretionary grant funding for the approximately \$40M-\$250M in capital improvement projects identified along the corridor, matched by resources provided through MaineDOT, station communities, host railroads and Amtrak.

B. Anticipated environmental, congestion mitigation, and other public benefits of the Corridor

The Downeaster Corridor is an existing operating railroad right-of-way that provides a climate-friendly transportation alternative to driving along congested roadways including I-95, I-295 in



Maine and Route 1 in mid-coast Maine. Enhancing the Downeaster Corridor reduces dependence on the personal automobile and support safety initiatives. The Corridor connects rural, suburban and urban areas in northern New England and provides access to the nation's rail transportation network. The Corridor provides equity by connecting a wide range of demographic populations to employment, education, medical, entertainment and other critical services and opportunities. The Corridor development and improvement projects anticipated will create, sustain, and improve the advancement of good paying quality jobs across a variety of disciplines. It will also increase mobility options for an aging population in both rural and suburban areas within Maine for access to medical appointments, recreational travel, and commuting.

C. Projected Corridor trip times and their competitiveness with other transportation modes

The trip time between Brunswick and Boston North Station is 3 hours and 20 minutes. Projected travel time between Brunswick and Rockland is 2 hours. Commercial air options do not exist along the Downeaster Corridor. Trip time competitiveness with highway modes varies among station pairs. Travel between interim stations is often most competitive because it circumvents travel on small secondary roads. Travel between stations accessed by high-capacity highways can be slightly longer in off-peak periods, but highly competitive during the peak-hour travel periods. Proposed improvements will reduce travel time along the Corridor.

D. Anticipated positive economic and employment impacts along the Corridor

Downeaster passenger rail service has been a catalyst for economic growth along the Corridor demonstrated by the housing, commercial, medical and educational developments which have occurred around stations. These include new construction of housing and commercial spaces, restoration of historic mills into residential complexes, and the transformation of brownfield sites into recreation and activity centers. This trend is expected to continue and grow with expanded service areas on the Corridor. NNEPRA partners closely with station communities and nearby municipalities to maximize growth potential and ensure compatibility with local goals.

E. Benefits to rural communities along the Corridor

Nearly all current and anticipated station communities along the Corridor are rural, and benefit from access to employment, services, and recreation opportunities. Connectivity to Boston and beyond is a significant asset and provides an ability to attract residents and businesses.

F. Historically unserved or underserved and low-income communities or areas of persistent poverty served by the Corridor

The Corridor serves a diverse region with traditionally lower income levels and higher poverty rates at the east/Rockland end and a high elderly population throughout. Using USDOT's mapping tool, the Downeaster currently has stations located in two areas of persistent poverty: Durham, NH and Haverhill, MA; the station planned for service to Rockland, ME will add a third. Additionally, four census tracts designated as Areas of Persistent Poverty and one census track designated as a Historically Disadvantaged Community are located within a ¼ mile of existing Downeaster service stations.

G. Benefits or improvement to connectivity with existing or planned transportation services of other modes along the Corridor

The Downeaster Corridor currently benefits local transit services by transporting thousands of passengers with a need for last-mile connections and is likely to be a catalyst for new ground transportation services along the Rockland Branch. Technology and communication improvements to streamline transfers between North Station and Back Bay/South Station will support existing and planned multi-modal connections in Boston as well.

H. Corridor connections the most populated metropolitan areas

The Downeaster Corridor connects rural, suburban and small urban areas of Maine and New Hampshire to Boston, MA, the 23rd most populated area in the U.S. and beyond including New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C.

I. Corridor enhancements to the regional equity and geographic diversity of intercity passenger rail service

The Downeaster Corridor enhances geographic diversity by connecting rural, suburban and small urban areas of Maine and New Hampshire to Boston, MA and Amtrak's National Network including the Northeast Corridor.

J. Integration of the Corridor into the national rail passenger transportation system and benefits created for other passenger rail routes and services.

Improved integration of the Downeaster Corridor into the national rail passenger transportation system through technology and communication improvements will expand rail access throughout New England, the Northeast Region and beyond.

Technical Merit

A. Applicant Readiness

The NNEPRA Team has successfully managed Corridor planning, maintenance and construction projects and has overseen the daily operation of passenger rail service for more than 20 years. Including recent participation in the update of the Maine State Rail Plan. NNEPRA has identified contractor support, and non-Federal resources for updating the Service Development Plan for the Corridor as well as a preliminary scope and schedule.

B. Key Personnel Qualifications

The Project Team will be led by the NNEPRA Executive Director, Patricia Quinn. Patricia joined NNEPRA in 2000 and has been Executive Director since 2005. Patricia plays an active role in the day-to-day operation of Downeaster service, regularly interfacing with Amtrak, host railroads, station communities and funding partners. Patricia has participated in all Downeaster capital, maintenance and planning projects since 2005, including the initial Downeaster Service Development Plan (SDP) and the Maine State Rail Plan.

William Gayle, NNEPRA Director of Policy and Administration, will manage all procurements, federal compliance and reporting requirements associated with the preparation of the SDP. Will joined NNEPRA in 2019 and has been actively involved with all aspects of managing a number of federal grants and



initiatives including the Wells Area Improvement Project (CRISI), several FTA formula fund grants, and SAIPRC.

James Russell, NNEPRA's Manager of Special Projects, will provide technical assistance related to infrastructure improvements and NEPA. Jim has provided oversight and management of NNEPRA projects and initiatives since 2010 including the rehabilitation of 28-miles of freight track to support expanded Downeaster service to Brunswick, construction and maintenance of a 70,000 SF train layover and servicing facility, the Royal Siding Project and scores of grade crossing replacements and other capital maintenance projects, along with the ongoing Wells Area Improvement Project.

NNEPRA's Deputy Director, Natalie Bogart, and Passenger Services Manager, Brian Beeler II collectively have nearly 30-years of experience at NNEPRA providing oversight of Downeaster service and will provide information resources, input and support throughout the update of the SDP and into Project Development and execution.

The MaineDOT is assembling a team to assist NNEPRA with NEPA, real estate and engineering support for the SDP.

NNEPRA expects to contract with consultant teams with working knowledge of the Downeaster Corridor and NNEPRA's priorities to provide planning, engineering, and environmental support for the SDP update.

C. Applicant Commitment to the Implementation and Operation of the Corridor

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, as established in Maine Statute ([Title 5, section 12004-F, subsection 16](#)) to restore and thereafter continue the operation of passenger rail service between points within and outside of Maine. The Maine Legislature further authorized NNEPRA to cooperate and enter into agreements, contract and compacts with any government agency to allocate money and take actions to fulfill its obligations. The MaineDOT has agreed to provide funding to NNEPRA consistent with its annual operating budget to meet obligations. As noted in the attached support letter, the MaineDOT has consistently provided a strong financial commitment to the existing service since it began in 2001.

NNEPRA's 20-year service agreement with Amtrak to operate Downeaster service expired in 2021. The parties subsequently entered into a 10-year service agreement for the operation of Downeaster service through 2032.

D. Route Identified in Regional or Interregional Planning Study

The [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#) are included in the 2023 update to the Maine State Rail Plan and are expected to be included in a pending update to the Service Development Plan. They are also included in long-range transportation planning studies for the greater Portland Region published by PACTS (the Metropolitan including Transit Tomorrow and Connect 2045).

E. Funding Commitment

The MaineDOT has agreed to provide funding to NNEPRA consistent with its annual operating budget to meet obligations. As noted in the attached support letter, the MaineDOT has consistently provided a strong financial commitment to the existing service since it began in 2001. Currently, MaineDOT provides \$2 million in state matching funds to the annual operating budget. This financial support

extends beyond operating assistance as well. Most recently, MaineDOT provided \$4.6 million in state funding for the Wells Area Improvement Project to match FY19 CRISI Grant funding. MaineDOT remains committed to providing state funding, when available, to support projects and service improvements identified in the Service Development Plan, including match for Federal funding. MaineDOT will also continue provide state funding necessary to support NNEPRA's annual operating budget.

F. Corridor Inclusion in State Rail Plan

The Corridor was identified in the [Maine State Rail Plan of 2014](#). The [NNEPRA Strategic Initiatives for the Downeaster Corridor](#) are included in the 2023 update to the [Maine State Rail Plan](#).

VIII. DOT Strategic Goals

The Downeaster Corridor furthers the DOT Strategic Goals as outlined below:

Safety

The Downeaster Corridor is a mixed-use passenger/freight corridor. The improvements made to date in support of passenger service, as well as those planned for the future, significantly improve the safety of the rail infrastructure by upgrading grade crossings, operational communication and signal systems, and bridges. PTC will be installed between the MA/NH state line and Brunswick, ME in 2024.

On a bi-monthly basis, NNERPA hosts a station community meeting as a forum to raise and address safety and operational challenges among other items. With the extension of service into Rockland, ME it is anticipated that this venue will continue to provide a valuable opportunity to increase safety with local communities specifically related to highway-rail grade crossing and reducing trespassing incidents within the corridor.

Infrastructure Investment and Job Creation

The Downeaster Corridor is constructed and the Downeaster service and has created over 100 long-term jobs. Passenger rail service improvements and expansions associated with investments in the Corridor will create more job opportunities associated with operations, maintenance and support services.

Support Resilient Supply Chains & Economic Opportunity

The Downeaster Corridor is a mixed-use passenger/freight corridor. The improvements made to date in support of passenger service, as well as those planned for the future, have increased operating speeds of both freight and passenger trains, added capacity by construction of double-track to reduce congestion and alleviate bottlenecks. These improvements have helped to spur economic development in areas of Historically Disadvantaged and Areas of Persistent Poverty (Biddeford, ME) as well as redevelopment of former brownfields to mixed use development sites (Brunswick, ME). NNEPRA partners with stakeholders to the extent possible to further transit-oriented development along the corridor, recently working with the PACTS metropolitan planning organization on a Transit-Oriented Development Plan for Saco, ME.

With the planned increase in Downeaster daily round-trips within Maine after the completion of the Wells Areas Improvement Project, greater transportation options will be available to several of Maine's major educational institutions located along the Corridor such as Bowdoin (Brunswick, ME), University of Southern Maine (Portland, ME), and University of New England (Biddeford/Saco, ME). Additionally,



with the relocation of Portland Station, greater access to jobs and healthcare will be available due to the direct access to Mercy Northern Light Hospital and increased access via shuttle to Maine Medical Center in Portland, ME.

Equity

The Downeaster Corridor enhances equity and expands transportation options for underserved communities by connecting rural, suburban and small urban areas of Maine and New Hampshire to Boston, MA and beyond. Projects completed on and planned for the Corridor support local and small business participation and growth and have contributed to job creation and community revitalization. NNEPRA has sponsored a series of public meeting, accessible for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, to share information and gather feedback related to Corridor improvements, and will conduct similar outreach through Service Development Plan outreach.

Climate and Sustainability

The Downeaster Corridor reduces emissions by providing a sustainable transportation alternative for persons travelling on the region's congested road and highway system.

Transformation

The Downeaster Corridor has transformed passenger and freight transportation in the region. The Corridor's aging assets were rehabilitated and consistently maintained to high quality standards to support the movement of people and goods along the Downeaster's current route. All future improvements and service expansions will further maximize the utility of the nation's rail network and add transportation capacity to congested corridors.

Civil Rights and Title VI

NNEPRA is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in the conduct of its business, including its Title VI responsibilities – the delivery of equitable and accessible transportation services. NNEPRA recognizes its responsibilities to the communities in which it operates and to the society it serves. It is NNEPRA's policy to utilize its best efforts to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under its program of transit service delivery and related benefits. As such, a copy of NNEPRA's Title VI Plan is posted on the website (www.nnepra.com). NNEPRA has a Civil Rights Liaison the ensures compliance with civil rights obligations and nondiscrimination laws.