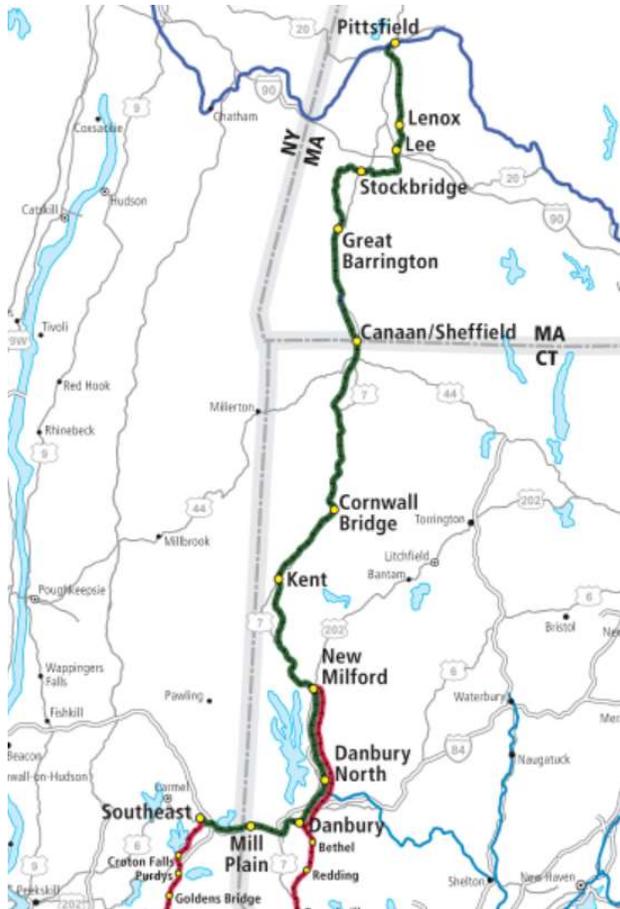




THE TRAIN CAMPAIGN

The Berkshire (Housatonic) Line

The Housatonic Line—also known as the Berkshire Line—was the route to western Connecticut and the Berkshires from 1842 until 1971. It operates today as a freight line run by Housatonic Railroad Company. Efforts to restore passenger service have been underway since 2010, when a study by a Williams College economist showed:



- **Economic benefits to MA and CT of over \$1 billion in the first decade of service.** (Benefits to CT were greater than to MA, at over \$500 million.)
 - **Traffic and public safety spending decreases of \$8,500,000.**
 - No dollar figure was attached, but there would be an estimated 2.2 x 10⁻⁷ degrees Celsius reduction in global temperature.
- The study did not measure other significant, widely recognized benefits:
- Transit-oriented development (TOD): in-migration of people, businesses, and new activity
 - Transit-oriented development near the stations, controlled by towns to the benefit of taxpayers
 - Intra-county & intra-regional travel

A **2010 market research study** showed private-sector operation without public operating funds is feasible. Details include:

- Ridership of 2 million one-way fares per year
- Strongest demand in summer but very good year-round demand
- Demand for service to and between towns along the line.

Upgrades

- \$43+ million: Berkshire Line upgrade in Massachusetts. In Q4 2019, 45,000 new ties were installed. Rail-bed ballast was laid in 2020 along with more ties. #136 welded rail is being installed in 2021.
- \$8.6 million: Repairs to four railroad bridges on the Housatonic (Berkshire) Line in the New Milford area.

The upgrade including #136 rail in MA is being done for about \$1 million/mile. The 50 miles of track between Danbury and the MA state line needs the same upgrade (37 miles owned by CT, the rest by Housatonic Railroad). The 14 miles between New Milford and Danbury and about ten miles between New Milford and the MA state line will need to be double-tracked so

that trains can pass efficiently, a total of about \$110 million.

The distance between Berk Junction and Southeast, on the Maybrook Line, is 13 miles. The rail on that line is newer and there is plenty of room in the Right of Way for double-tracking. The City of Danbury is focused on this upgrade with a \$1 million feasibility study funded by New York Metropolitan Transportation Council for fast-track passenger service to NYC.

Support & Legislation

The Berkshire (Housatonic) Line is ranked #1 in Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's Regional Transportation Plan and is supported by town officials in Massachusetts and Connecticut, notably in North Canaan and New Milford. A study in 2021 showed the 3 metro regions served by the Berkshire Line in the top 10 in the United States in terms of percentage population growth during the pandemic.

- 2021 BRAIN TRAIN Act sponsored by Senators Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren, Rep Jim McGovern: "New major legislation will help fund East-West Rail, South Coast Rail, a Berkshires Housatonic Line, and more" <https://www.markey.senate.gov/>
- 2021 HD.3571 An Act special act funding a study of passenger service on the Housatonic rail line. Sponsored by MA Reps Smitty Pignatelli (4th Berkshire), Tricia Farley-Bouvier (3rd Berkshire), Todd M. Smola (1st Hampden), Brian M. Ashe (2nd Hampden), and Senator Joanne M. Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester).
- 2021 Early-Action in the North Atlantic Rail Initiative.