GREENFIELD — Gov. Deval Patrick rolled into Greenfield Wednesday aboard a passenger train to announce the state is spending $17 million to advance the Amtrak Vermonter passenger service, scheduled to begin Dec. 29.

That money will buy 49 miles of track between the Connecticut and Vermont borders, once again carrying passenger trains through Greenfield, which was once a hub of freight and passenger train service.

“Every place a train has ever stopped, it’s been good for the local economy,” Patrick said.

“When we invest in ourselves and in our future, we build a stronger and more inclusive future,” he told a group of reporters and local and state officials at the Energy Park, built on the site of Greenfield’s last passenger rail station.

“It’s about how we shape and build our own future, rather than leaving it to chance.”

Using part of $73 million in federal funding awarded to Massachusetts for acquisition and upgrading of the line, the state is also in the process of building a rail platform onto the John W. Olver Regional Transit Center on Olive Street. It will serve the Vermonter service that would potentially shave 25 minutes off the detour through Palmer and Amherst that has been in place since 1989.

Using $30 million from a new state transportation bond bill, the state is also refurbishing MBTA rail cars and...
signal installation. The restoration is fund- ed through a $75 million grant awarded by the Federal Railroad Administration and approximately $40 million dollars in state funds. The work is expected to be complete in 2016, after the start of passen- ger service. These changes will improve ing freight train traffic and the Vermonter and enhance capacity on the rail line to accommodate future increased levels of train traffic.

What’s happening here, in terms of the expansion of the innovation economy, the energy in the collaborations around Greenfield and Northampton, Springfield, is extremely important,” Patrick said.

Locals benefit
Greenfield Mayor William Martin, pointing to the town’s historical role as a crossroads, said returning rail service here should have a “ripple effect” that will boost the local economy.

“With the increased use of technology, the restoration will not only accommodate more freight. Purchasing as by being built to a standard that can de- 

...ready added, the “Knowledge Corridor” is a rail asset that will play a key role in the region’s transportation system, both by delivering improved customer service in the form of faster travel times, as well as by being built to a standard that can be used for state funding targeted at areas with- 

...Greenfield’s new platform coming soon
...The new Greenfield rail platform, which is set up nicely for the beginning of pas- senger rail service. I think a lot of people in Franklin County are looking forward to it.

...and Kulik said that the state’s development of commuter service along the Connecticut River even offers the potential for future rail-service in the hilltowns.

...and Pan Am and Norfolk Southern, has large- ly been completed, according to Mass. Transportation Secretary Richard A. Davey.

...The 49-mile stretch is now undergoing a major upgrade to allow for more effi- cient passenger service and better mainte- nance and enhancement of freight service, according to the governor.

...The agreement between the state and Pan Am Southeast, a joint venture of Pan Am and Norfolk Southern, has large- ly been completed, according to Mass. Transportation Secretary Richard A. Davey.

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