

## **05 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The structure and method for public outreach and engagement conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is articulated in the agency's Public Participation Plan (PPP). The text of that plan is included in Appendix 05-A, in full, for reference. During the last quarter of 2013, MassDOT's Office of Diversity and Civil Rights incorporated significant additions and revisions to the PPP to include civil rights-related public outreach and engagement considerations, such as nondiscriminatory outreach as envisioned under Title VI and accessible public outreach as envisioned under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These civil rights-related protocols are presented in numerous contexts, namely – general public meetings, targeted outreach to form advisory bodies, and one-on-one interactions. By following the steps outlined in this plan and by utilizing the resources contained therein, MassDOT personnel as well as contractors and consultants responsible for MassDOT public outreach are better able to engage the public in a Title VI- and ADA-compliant manner.

### **Public Comment**

As of the time of this writing, MassDOT's Public Participation Plan is undergoing a required forty-five (45) day public comment period (scheduled to end on April 14, 2014, which is after the submission deadline for this Title VI Program). This time allows for the public, subrecipients, contractors, and any interested stakeholders to review the revised plan and provide feedback. Within approximately thirty (30) days of the close of the public comment period, MassDOT will incorporate any relevant public comments into a final revised version of the PPP and submit the final PPP to our federal partners for review and approval. The Plan provided in Appendix 05-A dates to December 18, 2013, and is the same version currently undergoing the public comment process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On June 20, 2014, MassDOT submitted a revised Public Participation Plan to FTA. The revised plan, dated 5/15/14, incorporates the public comments received during the Public Comment Period referenced here. The Plan found in Appendix 05-A is now the 5/15/14 version.

MassDOT formally announced the start of the current public comment period via an electronic announcement. This announcement was sent using “GovDelivery,” an electronic outreach tool recently procured and put into use by the agency. GovDelivery allows public entities to maintain topic-based outreach databases and disseminate customized electronic messages. Individuals and organizations can opt-in to receive these communications, by topic, and contacts can also be added by MassDOT staff. For instance, if a public meeting sign-in sheet contains a new email address that is not in the database, the address is added to ensure that the meeting attendee begins receiving announcements. MassDOT maintains a Civil Rights related GovDelivery topic and contacts list, which is a compilation of individuals and entities identified by MassDOT as well as those on the contact lists maintained by each of the thirteen (13) MPOs/RPAs across the Commonwealth. MassDOT’s Office of Diversity and Civil Rights recently coordinated an effort in each MPO/RPA to expand their outreach lists with Title VI- and ADA-related stakeholders and organizations that had not yet been incorporated into MPO/RPA outreach. This effort saw the statewide list of contacts swell from 3,000 to 5,000. The announcement regarding the Public Participation Plan public comment period was sent on February 20, 2014, to all of these 5,000 contacts.

## **Implementation**

### *Internal to MassDOT*

The final draft of the PPP, once completed following the close of the public comment period<sup>2</sup>, is designed to append the existing outreach protocols maintained across MassDOT’s departments with public outreach responsibilities (such as Planning, Rail and Transit, Right of Way, Environmental, etc.). For instance, MassDOT Right of Way agents follow the outreach protocols contained in the Right of Way Manual. The PPP is now considered a component part of that manual, ensuring outreach by agents that is informed by and compliant with civil rights considerations and requirements (such as language access). The internal review process undertaken with the current draft of the PPP included the input and revisions made by leadership and staff across these units.

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<sup>2</sup> See Footnote 1

ODCR's Title VI staff has begun strategizing a series of trainings that will accompany the release and dissemination of the final draft of the plan.<sup>3</sup> The effectiveness of the dissemination and training strategies will be monitored by the MassDOT Title VI Working Group, and any modifications to the approach will be informed by that multi-disciplinary group. MassDOT offices responsible for the greatest degree of public engagement (such as Project Management and Right of Way) have already begun implementing the plan's Civil Rights related protocols, with consultation of ODCR's Title VI staff. By way of example, Right of Way agents are now collecting demographic surveys from individuals affected by property takings related to a transportation project, and Project Managers are proactively assessing the need for language services in planning public meetings/hearings.

### *External to MassDOT*

MassDOT designed the Civil Rights related elements of the Public Participation Plan to serve not only MassDOT's needs but also the needs of subrecipients and contractors. The draft plan has been shared with all of the subrecipient MPOs/RPAs as well as the subrecipient RTAs. These subrecipients are encouraged to rely on MassDOT's PPP as a template document when developing/revising their own Public Participation Plans and to adopt the Title VI and ADA protocols contained therein. ODCR reviews these plans at least triennially with the submission of Title VI Programs by each of these subrecipients.

Consultants and contractors responsible for MassDOT public engagement are equipped with this plan and directed to conduct outreach in accordance with it.

## **Summary of Outreach**

The following pages contain a summary of outreach efforts on the program level for MassDOT projects. The tabular data contains information on project or program name, goals of outreach, dates of outreach, descriptions of the targeted groups or audiences, the channels used to reach this audience, estimates of reach or counts of participants, and any notes for follow-up. This summary of outreach includes eight programs or projects that MassDOT has engaged in since the previous Title VI program update in 2011.

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<sup>3</sup> On June 20, 2014, MassDOT submitted the final draft of the Public Participation Plan training materials.



## Summary of Outreach Efforts

Public Outreach Program	Goal/s of Outreach	Dates	Description of Targeted Audience (LEP or Protected Class)	Channels Used	Estimated or Actual Reach	Follow-up Notes
<i>Green Line Extension: Completion of Preliminary Design - Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>	Outreach to E. Cambridge, Somerville and Medford, urban and diverse communities; to provide multiple opportunities for participation; the project is itself mitigation for Central Artery Construction	Public hearing was conducted on 10/20/2011; comment period through 11/18/2011	Low English proficiency; low income; Spanish speaking; transit riding populations	Emails; website; media advisories; local newspaper ads and flyers in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole, and media coverage; outreach to community groups; post card to direct route abutters in all 3 communities; fact sheets (English, Spanish and Haitian Creole)	Lengthy hearing with dozens of commenters participating	Transcript was provided and made part of the record. The comments were overwhelmingly positive since the light rail is viewed favorably by the communities and will provide a faster ride to a major employment center.
<i>Beyond Boston: A Transit Study for the Commonwealth</i>	Gather input on transportation challenges faced by transit riders and underserved populations across the Commonwealth, as well as learn understand the service challenges faced by the operators. Develop a plan to provide more resources to enhance and expand transit.	Interviews and meetings took place between 10-14-2011 and 6-30-2012	Transit riders across the state; human service transit operators; low income and low English proficiency populations; regional planning agencies; economic development agencies; also incorporated concerns heard through the weMove Massachusetts process (simultaneous project)	Interviews; 9 Adv. Committee meetings; interviews; website postings of agendas, materials, presentations and final reports; service data on RTA's; incorporated data from SRTA survey and outreach and weMove Mass work	MassDOT organized a Study Advisory Committee composed of representatives of MDOT Civil Rights; Regional Transit Authorities (RTA's); labor; council on aging; Exec Office of Human Services; planning groups. Team interviewed MassPIRG; Human Services Transit Office; Bus Riders United and CEDC of Southeastern MA; RTA operators; Office of Civil Rights	

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<i>South Station Expansion</i>	To provide an interactive and credible public process that welcomes communities of interest, those who use the station, those who live or work near the station; to mitigate any negative effects of future development on EJ populations; to ensure fair and full participation in the planning; and to prevent the denial, reduction in or significant delay in receipt of benefits by minority or low income populations	Began in July 2012, still ongoing	Low income populations who use or work in the station; adjacent neighborhoods, including Chinatown and Fort Point communities; general users of South Station	Website with accessible materials; meetings; fact sheet and notices in English and Chinese; email information, blogs, Facebook, Twitter; briefings for neighborhood groups (with translator in Chinatown); coordination with city of Boston Office of Neighborhood Services	Two public open houses; an ENF public meeting; 229 meetings with advocacy and neighborhood groups; city of Boston; property owners; elected officials; planners; abutters; developers; media coverage of public events and blogs on a wide variety of topics; online survey; fact sheets; PowerPoint presentations (all materials are 508 accessible); email blasts	All public materials include some version of information on how to request translated materials or an interpreter; how to file a complaint
<i>Silver Line Gateway Planning Project</i>	Present potential plans and routes to English and Spanish speaking residents of East Boston and Chelsea to develop a preferred route; involve Low English speakers; provide accessible and translated materials; gather comments and incorporate in next phase of planning and design	January 2013 through Fall 2013; interim phase underway to bridge to final design	English and Spanish speaking residents of Chelsea and East Boston; low income residents; riders of current transit; abutters to the potential rights-of-way in low-income neighborhoods	Bilingual (English-Spanish) meeting flyers, ads, notices on buses, and emails; interpreters at all public meetings; partnered with a local group for translations and interpretations (Centro Latino); tracked comments and public issues; translated presentations and posted on website (accessible); survey in English and Spanish on ridership; four public meetings	Four public meetings were well-attended and included simultaneous Spanish interpretation; emails, flyers and ads were posted/placed in English and in Spanish; one meeting was held entirely in Spanish; presentations were made available in English and in Spanish; a website includes documents and presentations.	All public materials include some version of information on how to request translated materials or an interpreter; how to file a complaint

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<i>South Coast Rail</i>	Outreach to 31 cities and towns on the southeast coast of MA, ongoing for 5+ years; understand transit needs and support access to better transit throughout the region and to Boston; include low English proficiency, low income and non-English speaking populations; address lack of access to Boston Metro Area (only major MA cities without such access).	Began early in 2008, and continuing	Residents of 31 cities and towns, low English speaking populations, Spanish and Portuguese populations, low income residents	Fact sheets (English and translated into Spanish and Portuguese); project information in three languages sent to churches, economic development agencies; website; dozens of briefings, community meetings, public meetings, hearings; website; media materials; emails; post cards to abutters; speeches; project displays and contests; meetings with elected officials	The project has wide reach and approval in communities on the south coast. To encourage low income participation, MassDOT has paid to extend service hours for SRTA, the local transit service, to include riders in public events. MassDOT also contributed to a survey of needs for New Bedford residents (multilingual) with regard to public transit. The project is transitioning from preliminary to final design, so briefings are held in response to requests; they will become more robust again after award of the final design and permitting contract.	
<i>Grand Junction Transportation Study</i>	To engage various stakeholders along the corridor, including concerned citizens, universities, employers, and the City of Cambridge. To gather feedback about the proposed plan.	December 2010 to June 2011	Targeted to all residents and users of the transportation system in Cambridge, Somerville, and the communities along the Framingham/Worcester Commuter Rail Line. No specific outreach was done to targeted groups.	Two large public meetings, advertised locally. Smaller stakeholder meetings with institutions and government. Project website and email distribution list.	Over 300 attendees at the two large public meetings combined.	

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<i>You Move Massachusetts, We Move Massachusetts</i>	The <i>you Move</i> Massachusetts (YMM) strategic outreach initiative represented a coordinated effort to better understand the needs of our customers and has informed this and other planning efforts. This initiative was followed by the mm plan that serves as the Commonwealth's long range plan.	September 2008 to February 2014	mm was targeted to all users of the system, including Title VI stakeholder groups, those with a low level of English proficiency, elderly or elder services groups, rural residents, low income, minority, community action or economic development groups, disabled groups, Latinos, African-Americans, councils on aging, neighborhood and family alliances, economic development agencies, planning commissions, community health centers, and homeless programs.	Public comments were solicited through public workshops as well as a project web site and comment letters, emails, and telephone calls. The 26-item questionnaire was prepared in five languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese (on-line only). MassDOT also distributed a press release promoting the questionnaire (in five languages) to all English and non-English media outlets in the Commonwealth.	Through the mm process we received more than 700 individual comments. The goal of WMM outreach was to gather information from groups whom MassDOT felt were not well represented in the YMM phase of outreach and who are hard to reach. Nearly 1,900 responses were received.	
<i>Roxbury/Dorchester/Mattapan Transit Needs Study</i>	To engage public transit customers and other stakeholders from the three Boston neighborhoods on the types of improvements to MBTA service they would like to see over the short, medium and long term.	January 2011 through March 2012	Outreach focused on residents and MBTA customers in these three, predominately low-income and minority neighborhoods.	Four rounds of three public meetings (one each in Dudley Sq., Grove Hall, and Mattapan) for a total of 12 public meetings. 11 meetings of an advisory group consisting of 26 members who represented a range of perspectives and interest groups, including seniors, youths, and the disabled community. A survey was conducted by a team using handheld electronic devices on board transit vehicles and at key bus boarding locations.	1,344 survey responses, in addition to hundreds of public meeting attendees.	