

Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)
Transportation Work Group
Top Six Policy Priorities for the 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan, Submitted 9/28/2020

Preamble

The Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) Transportation Work Group has spent several months refining six policy priorities that we urge the EEA to advance in its update to the state’s Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030.

To become a decarbonized economy by 2050, internal combustion gasoline and diesel fueled vehicles on the Commonwealth’s roadways must be converted to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) and we must “move more people in fewer vehicles.”¹ The following six priorities aim to reduce transportation emissions in an equitable manner—this is not a complete list of what will be necessary to decarbonize our transportation sector, but rather some key strategies to make this transition by:

- promoting greater access to clean, efficient transportation throughout Massachusetts;
- achieving behavior changes and promote desirable clean mobility choices;
- enabling business models necessary for substantial electrification and mode shift;
- ensuring that environmental justice populations and underserved communities benefit; and
- moving quickly on critical policies and investments that will improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

The Commonwealth must ensure that all transportation policy and program decisions are rooted in robust stakeholder engagement and incorporate the needs and priorities of environmental justice populations. These programs must benefit and avoid harm to these populations, including through the prevention of residential community displacement. We appreciated and have incorporated recommendations from the GWSA IAC Climate Justice Work Group in our priorities below.

We encourage the Commonwealth, with EEA leadership, to enhance, better coordinate, and integrate the many existing funding and regulatory programs that can advance low- and zero-emission mobility systems. These programs and policies must work together to reach our net zero climate goal. Additionally, we implore the Commonwealth to develop aggressive schedules

¹ The Report on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth (2018)

and target dates to benchmark implementation of these and other clean transportation priorities.

Additionally, we are encouraged that the Commonwealth has already committed to two important multi-state clean transportation initiatives: Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) to cap transportation emissions and invest in clean, modern transportation options and the July 2020 Medium- and Heavy-Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that 100% of all new medium- and heavy-duty vehicle sales are ZEVs by 2050. We assume that the Commonwealth will continue to lead on both of these fronts and have therefore not included these the priorities below.

We thank EEA and the IAC for the opportunity to provide input during this critical, challenging time—we look forward to discussing these and other priorities to help realize a decarbonized transportation sector and economy.

Priority 1

Prioritize the decarbonization of transit and other diesel fleets now.

The Commonwealth must invest now to decarbonize public transit diesel fleets in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Financing options, policies, and/or incentives must be put in place to enable the MBTA and RTAs to procure zero-emission buses and vans, with steady progress toward new sales and retrofit targets over the next decade. Starting now, the MBTA and RTAs should design maintenance facilities and train staff to support ZEV vehicles, prioritizing bus fleets. The Commonwealth must also determine schedules for accommodating paratransit riders and their mobility equipment. Additionally, commercial freight, passenger transport companies, and public fleet owners, including school bus operators, should be required to transition to ZEVs, and financing options, policies, and/or incentives should similarly enable progress in these sectors.

Priority 2

Strengthen light-duty ZEV adoption by enhancing and expanding ZEV incentive programs and building out a robust and accessible charging and fueling network.

The Commonwealth must expand public programs, including MOR-EV, to focus on incentives for used ZEVs and other lower cost vehicle purchases, particularly for low- and middle-income residents and environmental justice populations. The Commonwealth must also support or partner with other stakeholders and organizations to encourage group purchasing, small business development in clean transportation, and the deployment of extensive marketing, education, and communications on ZEVs. This work must include innovative programs and

incentives to enable the necessary expansion of charging infrastructure or other zero-carbon fueling stations.

The Commonwealth should facilitate coordination across private and public networks to optimize programs and investment in existing infrastructure (such as utilizing the electric grid for managed charging solutions), and enable utility rate designs for efficient EV charging and usage patterns. These efforts should prioritize disadvantaged and underserved communities by offering tailored solutions for environmental justice populations and those with limited access to assigned parking or personal vehicles. Investments and program changes must ensure a net-benefit to low-income residents, businesses owned by people of color, and environmental justice populations.

Priority 3

Increase investment to expand public transit and enhance multi-rider mobility programs throughout the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth should conduct robust community engagement inclusive of environmental justice populations to determine public transit needs, including priority locations for expansion and increased frequency. Low-income fares and portable tickets across modes and boundaries should be developed and promoted with enhanced language access. Near-term priorities should include the electrification of regional rail lines that serve environmental justice populations. Additionally, the Commonwealth should incentivize employer-based TDM strategies and partnerships to increase the use of transit, ZEV shuttles, and ZEV carpooling.

Priority 4

Grow the share of non-car trips by supporting active and innovative mobility options.

The Commonwealth should work with cities and towns to increase the number of trips taken by transit, walking, or biking by building out a network of active transportation infrastructure through Complete Streets and other programs. These investments should be prioritized for environmental justice populations. Investment in these networks should also accommodate new and emerging micro-mobility technologies, such as electric bikes and scooters. A robust active transportation network should also improve and enable innovative models for last mile ZEV mobility and strengthen connections to transit.

Priority 5

Expand and strengthen incentives to advance equitable Transit Oriented Development.

The Commonwealth should incentivize the production of affordable and middle-income housing near transit so residents can live car-free and still access work, school, grocery stores, childcare, healthcare, and other services. Such incentives could come through an expansion of

the existing Housing Choice program or other efforts designed to incentivize equitable transit-oriented development. Additional benefits should be afforded to municipalities that adopt a higher inclusionary zoning requirement for sites near transit or pursue other similar measures to mitigate against possible residential and small business displacement. Parking should be appropriately priced to encourage other modes of travel, and cities and towns should be encouraged to reduce their parking requirements, particularly near transit, to avoid generating unnecessary car trips.

Priority 6

Assess and deliver smart roadway pricing strategies.

The Commonwealth should develop and execute a strategy to more accurately price the use of roads and bridges through smarter roadway pricing (e.g. tolling) in order to create a regionally equitable road pricing network, raise new revenue for public transit and zero-emission transportation alternatives, reduce GHG emissions, and improve air quality, especially for environmental justice populations. Pricing strategies should be rooted in robust stakeholder engagement and provide exemptions and/or rebates for low-income families. Revenue investments should prioritize increasingly decarbonized transit enhancements that provide a net benefit to environmental justice populations and transit-dependent communities.