



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, MassDOT Secretary & CEO
Meredith Slesinger, MassDOT Rail & Transit Administrator



To: MassDOT Board
From: Meredith Slesinger, Rail and Transit Administrator
Re: Current Activities
Date: January 14, 2022

TRANSIT

Workforce/Bus Driver Shortage Continues to Impact Regional Transit Authorities (RTA)

MassDOT Transit continues to coordinate with the Commonwealth's 15 Regional Transit Authorities regarding the workforce shortage. Lowell Regional Transit Authority and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority have made service adjustments given staff availability. MassDOT's Office of Performance Management & Innovation (OPMI) is surveying the 15 RTAs as part of a research project on the workforce shortage to help develop solutions for the RTAs and the MBTA. The next RTA Council meeting (1/26/2021) will include an agenda item on the survey results.

Upcoming RTA Council Dates

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 from 3-4:30pm

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 from 3-4:30pm

Wednesday, July 27, 2022 from 3-4:30pm

FY21 RTA Annual Performance Report Submission to the Legislature

Pursuant to Section 93 of the FY21 Massachusetts budget, MassDOT has submitted the FY21 Annual RTA Performance report to the legislature. The annual Report is a compilation of the data that MassDOT collected during FY21 on RTA performance. The data covers ridership, customer service and satisfaction, asset management and financial performance, including farebox recovery. The report also provides a discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic on RTA operations.

Key Points:

- The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact RTA target achievement in FY21, as no RTA reached their ridership target by fiscal year close. Riders who continued to use public transit throughout the pandemic were primarily those who used transit services to travel to and from essential workplaces.
- RTA revenues were also significantly disrupted by the pandemic, primarily due to decreased ridership and the pause in fare collection to protect drivers and riders.

Reinstatement of fare collection varied across RTAs with some RTAs electing to explore fare-free service longer-term.

- The RTAs are different from each other. This performance reporting system recognized this by making sure that every target was endorsed by the RTA and by allowing different metrics that some RTAs were more accustomed to.
- RTAs received a total of \$415 million in COVID relief funding from the federal government during FY 2020 and FY 2021 with considerable variation across RTAs in terms of amount of federal relief received and overall budget.

FY22 Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP) Update

Recipients of the FY22 CTGP Awards were notified in December 2021. This year, there were 56 applications by 39 unique organizations for a total of \$10,913,787 requested. Twenty-four were operating and mobility management applications totaling \$1,592,258 and 32 were for 137 vehicles totaling \$9,321,529. MassDOT's vehicle manufacturers have been notified of the awarded applicants and production can now commence on the vehicles. MassDOT Transit team continues coordinating with its vehicle manufacturers and working to address the impact that manufacturing delays are having on the production of the vehicles.

GATRA Staff Updates

GATRA Administrator Mark Sousa has resigned as Administrator. The GATRA board installed former GATRA Administrator Frank Gay as the Interim Administrator.

RAIL

CSX Acquisition of Pan Am Railways

On January 13 and 14, 2022, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) held a public hearing on the CSX acquisition of Pan Am Railways which requires the STB's approval. On January 3, MassDOT and MBTA submitted its final brief requesting the STB use its conditioning authority to ensure the transaction protects the public interest and subsequently testified at the hearing. These conditions include transferring dispatching to the MBTA on jointly-used commuter and freight lines; ensuring infrastructure and facilities is maintained in appropriate condition, and that Amtrak's service is expanded.

Immediately prior to the hearing CSX agreed to accept Amtrak's various requests for conditions, including facilitating service between Albany and Worcester. CSX also sent a letter to Amtrak separately agreeing conditionally to permit the contemplated Berkshire Flyer service to begin service between New York and Pittsfield this summer, though requiring a significant infrastructure investment in the future. While there are considerable details related to

infrastructure investments, equipment, and personnel availability to be worked out among the parties, CSX voluntarily signaling openness to expanded passenger service is a positive step.

Construction Activities

- A bridge replacement has started in Norton on the Middleboro Subdivision Line. The steel members are being fabricated and will be arriving for a late spring installation.
- Final repairs on five new bridge decks are nearing completion on Berkshire Line. Work includes walkways, handrails, backwall timbers, and bearing work. Work is substantially complete and punch list is being performed now.
- Approximately 80% of continuous welded rail has been completed on the Berkshire Line Phase I. The remaining 20% will be completed this spring (9.6 of 12 miles).
- Phase II Berkshire Line continuous welded rail bid package is being prepared for advertisement in February and will begin late spring. Phase III for the remaining Berkshire Line is being designed and will be advertised late this year/early next year.
- Three culvert headwalls are being repaired on the Knowledge Corridor and will be completed when the weather is warmer.
- Installation of 20,000 ties on Cape Main and Falmouth Line was advertised this month and will be completed later this year.