



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO
Astrid Glynn, MassDOT Rail & Transit Administrator



To: MassDOT Board

From: Astrid Glynn, Rail and Transit Administrator

Re: Recent Activities

Date: December 13, 2018

Transit:

RTA Task Force: The Task Force on Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Performance and Funding created by the FY19 Budget continues to meet. It has held 9 meetings and has had presentations on performance metrics, best practices, economic development, human service transportation, fare policy, and funding. The funding discussions were premised on the idea that there should be a clear link between performance and funding, but that there also needed to be stability and predictability. Accountability and the capacity for growth were identified as two other goals shared by several members of the Task Force. The Task Force was given examples from other states (Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, and Texas) that rely heavily on performance metrics when allocating state funding for transit. Those performance metrics typically include factors such as: passengers per revenue mile and/or revenue hour, local investment a share of operating expenses, operating expense per revenue mile and/or hour, ridership or ratio of passengers to service area population. The Task Force is scheduled to meet again on December 19 to continue the discussion of funding.

FY19 MassDOT Discretionary Funding Program Application-Released to RTAs: Thirty-one applications seeking \$7,963,290 were received from the Regional Transit Authorities seeking grants from the \$4,000,000 discretionary fund that the legislature created in the FY19 budget. All RTAs applied and 3 of the applications were joint applications. The applications are being reviewed and scored by MassDOT staff with the goal of announcing awards around the end of December.

FTA Review: FTA has notified MassDOT that it will be conducting a State Management Review (SMR) of MassDOT in FY19. This SMR helps FTA determine whether its recipients of federal dollars are administering FTA funded programs in accordance with United States Code, Chapter 53 of Title 49, federal transit law provisions. The SMR reviews asset management practices and program implementation to ensure that the FTA

programs are being administered in accordance with FTA requirements and are meeting program objectives. The State Management Review process is conducted every three years by contractors that FTA engages, but contractors for the upcoming year have not yet been brought on board by FTA. Until a new contractor has been assigned to conduct MassDOT's SMR, no definitive date can be scheduled for the review. MassDOT anticipates however, that the review will be conducted in late summer of 2019, as has been the schedule for the past few SMRs.

Rail

East-West Passenger Rail Study: The first meeting of the East-West Passenger Rail Study Working Group is scheduled for December 18 in Springfield. The Working Group represents stakeholders along the corridor between Pittsfield to Boston.

Capital Projects: Work continues on the Knowledge Corridor, the Berkshire Line, the Middleboro Secondary, the Cape Main, and the Framingham Secondary. .

South Coast Rail Early Actions: As part of the Early Action work planned for FY19, a contract to replace, repair, or refurbish some 80 culverts was advertised. Bids are due January 9, 2019.

BUILD Grant: Massachusetts was awarded a Federal grant for \$10.8m to increase the weight limits on the NECR freight line that runs between Connecticut and Vermont in the area east of Springfield. The line is currently rated for only 263,000 lbs.; the proposed work will increase the limit to 286,000 lbs., which is the current national standard. NECR and MassDOT have each pledged to provide a \$9.6m match and NECR has agreed to fund 100% of any cost overruns. The increased weight limit was recommended in the MassDOT Rail Plan and it will allow customers to ship fully loaded containers and not leave them only partially filled to comply with the lower weight limits. The connecting NECR line segments in Vermont and Connecticut are already at the higher weight limit, so this project will fill a gap in the system.

CSX Community Impacts: Community leaders in Middleboro, Walpole, Foxboro, and Agawam have expressed displeasure with some of CSX's operational practices. While this is largely an area in which Federal law and regulations prevail, MassDOT has been working with the communities and urging CSX to adopt operational changes that will reduce the negative impacts of freight rail service.