

Rail & Transit Report

Meredith Slesinger | Rail & Transit Administrator

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TRANSIT UPDATE

- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is working in coordination with the 15 RTAs to implement the Fare Free Pilot Program for Regional Transit Authorities under Section 1595-6370 of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Act, Chapter 126 of the Acts of 2022:
 - \$2.5M in FY23 RTA operating budget for grants for means-tested, discounted or fare-free pilot programs. MassDOT RTD received one joint application from all 15 RTAs requesting the entire \$2.5M to be allocated based on 2019 fare data, allowing all 15 RTAs to operate fare free for the month of December 2022. Final awards expected to be announced by Friday, October 21st.
- RTA Council – the next quarterly meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 25th. Topics for discussion include the MBTA's Bus Network Redesign, the transit workforce shortage, and other FY23 RTA items (e.g., deadlines, legislative requirements).
- Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program – solicitation for applications for the FFY23-FFY24 award cycle is now open. Applications will be accepted until COB on Friday, October 28th, with award announcements expected by Friday, December 2nd.
- MassDOT Transit staff will be presenting at the statewide MCOA Council on Aging Conference Oct 19-20 in Falmouth to promote driver training and MassDOT's Community Transit Grant Program to COAs.
- Administrator Slesinger joined MassDEP and GATRA for a Climate Week event celebrating the \$22 million for RTAs across the state to replace diesel buses with electric buses.

RAIL UPDATE

- FRA selected the Springfield Area Track Reconfiguration Project for a CRISI grant which will fund 50% of the \$3.5 million total cost for preliminary engineering and environmental work. MassDOT has selected a design consultant to start the field work this Fall to avoid the cold weather.
- Over \$3 million in IRAP awards were made to 7 businesses across the Commonwealth. Contracts for these awards are being processed to purchase materials this Fall and Winter for Spring construction.
- MassDOT Rail continues to work with CSX on their implementation plans since the merger with Pan Am Railways went into effect June 1. Maintenance on MassDOT property continues to handle freight and passenger trains safely.
- The Berkshire Line capital projects continues with bridge replacements and installation of continuous welded rail.
- Capital work continues in the eastern part of the State with improvements to 18 grade crossings.