

# Rail & Transit Report

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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
  - MassDOT has up to \$2.5 million to award to RTAs on grants for means-tested, discounted or fare-free pilot programs. Awards will be made on a competitive basis with funding provided contractually.
  - MassDOT Intends to make awards and implement the program by December 2022
- MassDOT Transit will soon post two transit vehicle related RFP's:
  - Phase II Battery Electric Bus Study: This follow up to the Phase 1 Study that MassDOT Transit is close to completing will provide order of magnitude numbers of BEB's that may be placed into RTA service. Phase II will look at the implementation and roll out of BEBs into RTA transit service. Phase II will evaluate maintenance facilities, charging capabilities and other infrastructure needs associated with BEB implementation.
  - MassDOT Transit Mini Bus Procurement. This RFP will award contracts to vendors that MassDOT will use to manufacture vehicles awarded through the Community Transit Grant Program
- MassDOT Transit attended the 2022 MARTA Fall Conference and Annual Meeting in Stockbridge, MA. Items on the Agenda include:
  - Panel Presentation on Electric, Hydrogen and Propane Vehicles-Where the industry is going and ideas on how to get there.
  - Panel Presentation on increasing Opportunities for CDL/Mechanics and transit jobs.
  - MassDOT ESTIP training for RTAs -This year marked a new era of STIP Development for transit projects using the application. MassDOT OTP developed ESTIP in coordination with RTAs, Highway Division, MPO Staff, FAPRO, and FHWA over the last few years to have a singular point of truth for STIP Development. This new tool will greatly increase efficiency in transit planning and capital programming.
- The biennial 5311(f) Intercity Bus application will be released September 2022. Intercity Bus providers can apply for operating funds to operate routes that connect rural and small urban areas with the national intercity bus network. Past awards have subsidized service on the Outer Cape onto Boston, MA, and Providence, RI, and service from Pittsfield to Boston.

# RAIL UPDATE

- FRA selected the Springfield Area Track Reconfiguration Project for a CRISI grant which will fund 50% of the \$3.5 million cost of preliminary engineering and environmental evaluation to reduce passenger and freight conflicts by improving capacity and efficiency. FRA issued a Pre-Award Authorization letter to start this project. This will allow us to perform survey work prior to the cold weather.
- Administrator Slesinger joined the Lieutenant Governor in New Bedford at Ice Cube Cold Storage to announce this year's IRAP award winners. Over \$3 million in awards were made to 7 businesses across the Commonwealth.
- MassDOT Rail continues to work with CSX on their implementation plans since the merger with Pan Am Railways went into effect June 1.
- This year's Berkshire Flyer service concluded and planning is underway to run a full season in 2023 (Memorial Day – Columbus Day) to evaluate plans for permanent service.