



Charles D. Baker, Governor
 Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
 Jamey Tesler, Acting MassDOT Secretary & CEO
 Astrid Glynn, MassDOT Rail & Transit Administrator



To: MassDOT Board
 From: Meredith Slesinger, Deputy Rail and Transit Administrator
 Re: Current Activities
 Date: March 24, 2021

TRANSIT

American Rescue Plan Act COVID Relief Funding

Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) signed into law on March 11, 2021, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stands to receive up to an additional \$1.043 billion to fund transit system operating expenses related to the preparation, prevention and response to the Covid pandemic. The preliminary estimate for the Regional Transit Authority’s (RTA) share of the new ARPA allocation to Massachusetts is \$177 million with the remainder going to the MBTA. Like previous federal Covid relief funds, the ARPA program is available at a 100% federal share.

RTA FY21 Discretionary Grant Program:

On March 23, 2021, Rail and Transit (RTD) made award announcements for the \$3.5 million SFY21 Discretionary Grant program. These competitive innovation grants implement best practices and innovative services to benefit customers. RTD received 17 applications from 11 of the 15 RTAs, totaling in \$4,525,703 in operating requests. Funding awards are detailed below.

RTA	Project Description	Operating \$ Requested
BAT	Sustain expanded service to Stoughton and add Sunday service for an additional 15 months	\$319,750
BAT	Support for the Brockton Commuter Rail Fare Initiative to offer a reduced Commuter Rail fare to Brockton residents to allow for adequate physical distancing on Boston-bound buses	\$10,000
BRTA	Continue to pilot evening service on Routes 1, 34 and 22, while discontinuing the evening service pilot on Route 11N and replacing it with evening service on Route 14, which connects several Environmental Justice communities in Pittsfield to employment and retail centers	\$488,880

CATA	Continue to provide Commuter Bus service operating since January between the Rockport and Gloucester Commuter Rail Stations and the Beverly Commuter Rail Station, plus an additional trip in the morning and evening	\$96,680
FRTA	FRTA Access Microtransit pilot extension for an additional year	\$246,122
GATRA	Continue providing GATRA Go microtransit service in the Plymouth area five days per week from 8:00AM-4:00PM	\$340,000
MART	Improvements to the MART JARC program through an expansion of hours and adding 6 additional communities to the service area, accompanied by a major marketing campaign	\$95,000
MWRTA	Expansion of the MWRTA CatchConnect Service to include Sunday service for existing DR customers and service to the Framingham Golden Triangle, an area in Natick and Framingham that consists of the Natick Mall, Walmart, Shoppers World, Sherwood Plaza, multi-unit housing communities and large office developments	\$400,000
PVTA	Pilot for the Northampton-Holyoke-Springfield Express, consisting of hourly service between Northampton and Holyoke Mall, hourly service between Northampton and Union Station, and half-hourly service between Holyoke Mall and Union Station from 7:00AM-8:00PM on weekdays and Saturdays utilizing electric buses	\$487,000
SRTA	Extend current pilots for Fall River 5 evening service, New Bedford 11 evening service, and the Fall River-New Bedford Intercity Express (9X) service for an additional 12 months	\$488,582
WRTA	Continued operations of the Via-WRTA on-demand microtransit service in Westborough, with an expansion of the service area into the neighboring town of Shrewsbury	\$527,986
TOTAL		\$ 3,500,000

March RTA Council Meeting-FY22-23 RTA MOU Update:

On March 11th, RTD and Acting Secretary Jamey Tesler chaired the quarterly RTA Council meeting. The meeting featured a presentation by MassINC on two polls it recently conducted on

pandemic travel demand, including transit ridership. The council program also included discussion of the bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for SFY22-23. The current round of MOUs, which tie RTA performance to state funding, are set to expire on June 30, 2021. RTD provided the RTAs with a high level overview of proposed changes to the MOU, many of which were recommended by the RTAs. These proposed changes include streamlining the metric collection process, reducing duplicative reporting and the addition of two new metric categories for Safety and Accessibility. RTD is beginning individual negotiations with each RTA.

RAIL

Intercity Passenger Rail Service

Pandemic-related service changes continue; the Vermonter service north of New York has not resumed service and the Valley Flyer is still operating reduced service with one round trip per day. Discussions continue regarding timing for resuming service.

Sale of Pan Am Railways

MassDOT is monitoring the acquisition of Pan Am Railways by CSX which filed to request Surface Transportation Board approval for the transaction on February 26 under “minor” transaction procedures. The Commonwealth filed to participate in the proceedings and opposed the application’s classification as “minor,” rather than “significant.” Given the regional impacts of the transaction and the considerable passenger and freight interests of the Commonwealth, an STB process that provides more careful review is necessary to ensure the public interest is protected.

Construction

- Framingham Secondary: Continuous Welded Rail project is 80% complete and is scheduled to be completed in June.
- Cape Main Line: The Hyannis Yard Project is 85% complete and is scheduled to be completed in May.
- Berkshire Line: The bridge rehabilitation program is 85% complete and is scheduled to be completed this year. The Continuous Welded Rail Project for the first third of this line is 10% complete and will be completed next year. Design for the second third of this line is being completed and procurement is scheduled for later this year.