



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: Current Activities  
Date: June 15, 2020

**Transit:**

*Recent Discretionary Federal Grant Awards:* The MetroWest RTA was awarded a \$300,000 FTA grant to develop new microtransit options for seniors and disadvantaged populations. The Martha's Vineyard Authority (VTA) was awarded a \$1,100,000 grant from FTA's Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program (Low-No) program. These funds will be used to support VTA's efforts to convert to electric buses.

*RTA service during COVID:* MassDOT – often joined by the MBTA – continues to meet weekly with the RTAs to review needs for PPE, evolving service patterns, and outreach to major local institutions.

*Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP):* The FY21 CTGP application cycle opened on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to close on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. Ninety-six individuals attended the two virtual trainings that MassDOT held for the CTGP this year, which was almost twice the number that attended in-person trainings last year due to the ease of accessing trainings online. Approximately fifteen of these individuals were new applicants. To fulfill awards made in the FY20 round of the CTGP, 126 vehicles are currently being manufactured and deliveries to grantees are expected to happen over the several weeks. There have been some delays in the manufacturing of this year's vehicles resulting from plant closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Transit Unit's Asset Management Coordinator has been working closely with vehicle dealers, manufacturers, and subrecipients to minimize the impact of this delay.

**Rail:**

*New England Central Railroad (NECR) BUILD grant:* MassDOT's Rail staff have been working closely with the NECR to comply with FRA's requirements for the issuance of the BUILD grant that was awarded to MassDOT and NECR in 2019 to increase the weight limits on the MA portion of NECR's rail line that runs from CT to VT. FRA has

now approved MassDOT's and NECR's April 30 submission requesting a Categorical Exclusion. This is a key milestone that was required before FRA would allow the grant to be obligated.

*Industrial Rail Access Program:* MassDOT Rail opened the new round for Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) grants. Railroads, shippers, receivers, and municipalities are invited to apply for grants to fund a portion of the cost of projects that will increase freight rail usage and thereby both increase economic development and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from truck travel.

*Amtrak service on the Knowledge Corridor:* Intercity train travel is still experiencing a severe ridership loss due to COVID, but MassDOT continues to purchase passenger service on the Knowledge Corridor under the so-called state supported rail program created in section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The states that, like Massachusetts, purchase service from Amtrak under this program have been discussing ways in which the program might be restructured to minimize the impact of lost fare revenue.