



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



To: MassDOT Board

From: Meredith Slesinger, Deputy Rail and Transit Administrator

Re: Current Activities

Date: October 8, 2020

**Transit:**

**RTA Council**

Secretary Pollack chaired a successful RTA Council meeting on September 22 which included participation by all 15 RTA administrators. The agenda included the following topics:

**Service Planning in a Pandemic**

Panel discussion of expert speakers on service planning:

- Scott Bogren, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
- Monica Tibbits-Nutt, 128 Business Council
- Kathyne Benesh, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)

**Electric Bus Deployment in Massachusetts**

Panel discussion on electric bus deployment in Massachusetts:

- Erik Stoothoff, MBTA
- Angie Gompert, Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA)
- Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA)
- Dennis Lipka, Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)

**Funding Issues**

Status of federal funding

- Speaker: Homer Carlisle, U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Discussion of RTA CARES Act spending

A follow up meeting to continue the discussion on Battery Electric Bus deployment is being scheduled with the 15 RTAs.

**FTA Help Improve Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Grant Program**

FTA announced the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority will receive \$680,000 for a transit review and improvement planning study. The study will provide recommendations for improved transit services and facilities, new routes, modern fare collection systems, and integrating low or no-emission buses—all to reduce travel times and create greater access jobs for rural residents in western Massachusetts.

**Rail:**

**East-West Passenger Rail Study**

The Advisory Committee for the East-West Passenger Rail Study met on September 30 from to review analysis of the three remaining alternatives, including updated ridership, cost estimates, and community and environmental impacts and discuss the next steps to complete the study, including the draft and final report.

**Construction**

- The Rail Division worked closely with the Highway Division to install a much-needed underpass under the mainline tracks in Springfield during the COVID-19 shutdown of the *Vermont*. The community will be safely connected at this location.
- The Rail Division worked closely with Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority to access the Hyannis Rail Yard with a new access road and in return provided them with more parking spaces. This new access road also gave the Highway Division additional property to improve Route 28 with a new grade crossing.
- Construction for replacing three and repairing three bridges has started on the Berkshire Line. This is being done prior to installing new continuous welded rail for this line.