Massachusetts

Transportation & Climate Community Engagement Workshops

Summer & Fall 2019

What We Heard About:

Equity ~ Opportunity ~ Investment

May 2020

BACKGROUND

A State Leading by Example

The Baker-Polito Administration has been aggressive in tackling climate change and working to improve transportation networks. Our state leaders clearly recognize the economic and environmental benefits of clean energy, clean transportation, and climate change readiness.

Massachusetts is required by the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) to achieve an overall reduction of at least 80 percent in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. On January 21 of this year, during his State of the Commonwealth address, Governor Baker proposed accelerating the goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs recently defined net zero emissions, establishing as a legal limit under the GWSA, that the emissions level in 2050 will not be greater than 85 percent below the 1990 level.

In 2016, Governor Baker signed Executive Order 569 to establish a strategic plan for continuing to reduce carbon emissions while directing new efforts across state government to adapt and plan for climate change. In his Executive Order, Governor Baker identified the transportation sector as the biggest current contributor to carbon emissions and directed his transportation and energy and environmental secretaries to begin advancing regional policy solutions to both reduce transportation sector emissions and improve our state's transportation network.

A Regional Call to Action

In December 2018, Massachusetts along with nine other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, as well as the District of Columbia, announced their commitment to design a new regional low-carbon transportation policy proposal that would cap and reduce carbon emissions from the combustion of vehicle fuels, and invest the proceeds from that program into cleaner, more resilient transportation.

This approach grew out of the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI), a regional collaboration of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States and the District of Columbia that seeks to improve transportation develop the clean energy economy and reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector. Founded in 2010 and facilitated by the Georgetown Climate Center, TCI's goal is to deliver better, more resilient transportation systems that benefit all communities, particularly those underserved by current transportation options and disproportionately affected by pollution.

In signing onto the December 2018 commitment, ten TCI jurisdictions agreed that they would work together over the course of 2019 to develop a policy proposal that would:

- Ensure that carbon reduction goals are met, while creating healthier and more livable communities.

- Create opportunities for jobs and economic growth along with new markets for low-carbon technologies, including through partnerships between government and private enterprise.

- Ensure that the benefits and burdens of both the pricing mechanism and investments are shared equitably across communities, address the concerns of those with limited alternatives to driving, and improve transportation equity for currently underserved and overburdened populations.

- Enhance the resilience of the transportation system.

- Reflect input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the TCI jurisdictions while ensuring that local communities are involved in decisions that affect them.

- Maximize environmental, economic, social, and public health benefits.

- Be pragmatic, transparent, and as simple as possible to implement; and

- Allow individual TCI jurisdictions to develop and implement complementary policies and determine how proceeds are invested.

In the ensuing months, the TCI jurisdictions first sought public input on how this effort might take shape, hosting regional workshops, engaging with stakeholders, and continuously soliciting written public comments. They developed a draft framework informed by the input received from experts and the general public.

Released in October 2019, the draft framework was made available for public comment and input on the direction of the regional policy proposal. Building on the draft framework and public input, in December 2019, the jurisdictions released a draft Memorandum of Understanding outlining the elements of the regional program. Public input was submitted to the TCI portal through February 28, 2020.

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

Engaging the Public in Massachusetts

During the summer and fall of 2019, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and the Department of Transportation (MassDOT) together convened a series of eleven community engagement workshops across Massachusetts.

Those who attended discussed how the state might best participate in the TCI regional policy design process to reduce carbon emissions from fuels and vehicles while making better, cleaner, and more resilient transportation widely available and fairly distributed.

Massachusetts Transportation & Climate Community Engagement Workshop Sites	
	**Boston (Roxbury):** Roxbury Community College
	Bourne: Massachusetts Maritime Academy
	Chelsea: Mary C. Burke Elementary Complex
	Fall River: Bristol Community College
	Haverhill: Northern Essex Community College
	Holyoke: Holyoke Community College
	Lawrence: Lawrence Free Library
	Pittsfield: Berkshire Athenaeum
	Springfield: American International College
	Worcester (2): Clark University & MassDEP Central Office

At these evening sessions, state agency staff connected with community groups and their members, business leaders, environmental advocates, municipal officials, and interested residents from across Massachusetts to discuss their needs, goals, and insights about reducing carbon emissions while improving transportation.

Through these workshops, EEA, MassDEP and MassDOT specifically sought to provide people with:

- More information and context about the possible regional low-carbon transportation policy that Massachusetts and other TCI jurisdictions are considering;
- An opportunity to ask questions and share ideas and insights about how state government could best address global warming pollution from transportation; and
- In the case of the fall workshops, the chance to engage in dialogue and provide feedback about the proposed policy framework.

The state agencies partnered with statewide, regional and community organizations to help publicize the workshops. Flyers were produced in four different languages to ensure the inclusion of all residents. In addition, language translation services were offered and requested at several of the workshops.

Format of Sessions

The agenda for each two-hour workshop included a series of short briefings from state environmental and transportation officials, followed by about 60 minutes of independent brainstorming and group discussion among attendees at tables, each assigned a group facilitator.

It was the facilitator's role to manage the timing and flow of conversation, ensure that all viewpoints were heard, and accurately record key comments for later state review. To further ensure that all perspectives were collected and considered, the facilitator encouraged all participants to record their ideas individually, before sharing them with others at the table.

As individual group conversations concluded, a spokesperson designated from each table summarized the key themes, observations, and ideas discussed for the entire group assembled. Written evaluations and anecdotal observations at each workshop location indicated that most attendees were very engaged in the program and felt that participating and providing their feedback and ideas had been a worthwhile use of their time.

KEY THEMES & FINDINGS

The transportation needs of Massachusetts communities and residents are wide ranging and differ depending on a number of factors including geography, land use, commuting needs, and socioeconomics. As a result, there were a wide range of interests and priorities articulated at the summer and fall 2019 workshops held across Massachusetts. We heard many perspectives about what our state and its Northeast and Mid-Atlantic partners should consider in developing a TCI regional policy to cap transportation emissions and invest the proceeds in a cleaner transportation future. We also heard that the Commonwealth should be considering other policies and investments to improve transportation options and address climate change.

At the same time, the conversations and airing of many viewpoints produced a notable amount of common ground. From the Merrimack Valley to the South Coast and Cape Cod, from the Berkshire Hills and Central Massachusetts to Greater Boston, a handful of shared and critical themes emerged. Overall, participants expressed grave concerns about the impacts of climate change and supported swift action by government to lower emissions and address climate challenges. The major themes throughout the workshops expressed the need for:

- **More & Cleaner Transportation Options.** Stakeholders believe public transit needs to be more affordable, convenient, safe and reliable, but also defined in new ways; that Massachusetts needs to electrify and reconfigure mass transit nearly everywhere - particularly services that may have worked for how people lived, worked, and shopped decades ago, but no longer do; and that biking, walking, ridesharing, and electric vehicle (EV) charging need to be factored into the mix.

- **Engagement & Transparency.** People, communities, and groups want a program that gives them a voice in spending decisions; makes sound investments that tangibly address their needs; has ambitious but realistic goals that can be easily measured and enforced; and demonstrates both fiscal efficiency and environmental improvement through publicly accessible data.

- **Environmental, Geographic & Social Equity.** Environmental Justice communities and vulnerable populations – including seniors, people of color, low-income and rural residents – want focused air quality improvements and monitoring near pollution "hot spots;" targeted investments in more affordable mass transit throughout the state, EVs, and in the case of western Massachusetts communities, broadband internet access; and better communication about these efforts and TCI as a whole, in language they understand.

- **Investments & Complementary Policies.** Stakeholders want to see Massachusetts and its communities integrate affordable housing, job training, and transit-oriented development with land use planning and community design so that in general, people don't have to travel as much to meet their basic needs (i.e., earning income, housing and feeding their families, etc.). They also have views and preferences about the types of clean air and clean transportation investments they would like to see advanced through the TCI regional policy.

A representative selection of more detailed and comments on each of these areas of discussion – presented in the words of participants who submitted them in writing, or as state agency staff transcribed them at the Massachusetts workshops – is provided in the Appendix beginning on page 6.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Massachusetts workshops in the summer and fall of 2019 workshops drew nearly 300 total participants representing over 130 public, private and non-profit organizations.

The Commonwealth wants to sincerely thank all individuals, groups, and officials who took the time to participate and offer their feedback on TCI and the regional policy design process. Throughout the public engagement process, we heard many excellent ideas and insights that will continue to help inform the state and regional policy decision-making processes as TCI partner jurisdictions consider how best to move toward a clean transportation future.

EEA, MassDEP, and MassDOT could not have successfully developed and presented the workshops without the assistance of statewide coalitions such as the Massachusetts TCI Table and Our Transportation Future, and the support of organizations including Berkshire Community Action Council , the Chinese Progressive Association, Coalition for Social Justice, Community Labor United, Environmental League of Massachusetts, GreenRoots Chelsea, Neighbor to Neighbor Coalition and Transportation for Massachusetts. We also are grateful to the Berkshire Regional Planning Council, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and other regional planning organizations for their assistance in publicizing and supporting these sessions.

NEXT STEPS

As noted earlier in this report, On December 17, 2019, the TCI jurisdictions released a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is the proposal for a regional program to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from transportation. The MOU fulfills the commitment TCI jurisdictions made in December 2018 to design this regional program within one year and builds on the draft framework released in October. Public comment on the MOU was encouraged and many submissions were made to the TCI portal by individuals and organizations throughout the TCI region. In December, TCI jurisdictions also

shared initial projections of the potential economic and public health benefits that this program could bring to the region.

The TCI jurisdictions will consider input received as well as additional technical analysis to inform the final program design, anticipated to be complete in late 2020 or early 2021. At that point, each jurisdiction will decide whether to sign the final MOU and participate in the regional program. In addition, the TCI jurisdictions will develop a "model rule" each participating jurisdiction will mirror in its own rulemaking to implement the program. While Massachusetts has existing legislative authority under the Global Warming Solutions Act, some states would need to seek authorization from their legislatures to participate in the program. It is anticipated the program could be in place by 2022.

APPENDIX

Detailed Comments: More & Cleaner Transportation Options

Electrify the Transportation System

- Require electric vehicle (EV) readiness in all new developments across the region.
- Electrify all transit vehicles and last-mile delivery.
- Pilot EV-only zones and/or reduce diesel use in low-income and minority communities by mandating EV targeted areas.
- Require all school buses to be electric-powered only after 2020 and provide school districts with incentives to convert.
- Require all gas stations to be built (or rebuilt) to include EV charging stations.
- Work with the state utility regulators to reduce electric rates for EV owners, public EV charging, and off-peak charging.
- Engage utilities in program design to spread EV charging costs and serve low-income and rural communities.
- Require EV charging to be increasingly powered by clean renewables.
- Provide battery storage incentives for private sector entities.
- Broaden state incentives for low-carbon transportation and public/private partnerships.
- Phase out sales of all gasoline and diesel engines in the region by 2040.
- Set registration fees for vehicles inversely to their combined EPA MPG.

- Require clean vehicles for all municipal services (electric and high levels of biodiesel) and private waste hauling.

- Install an EV fast-charging network across the region.

- Work with local governments to ensure that building codes require access to EV charging for residents of multi-family dwellings.

- Improve the range and utility of EVs and offer a wider variety of vehicle types from which to choose.

- Provide affordable access to vehicles and charging for low-income individuals and communities and prioritize infrastructure investments in places already overburdened by transportation emissions.

- Provide more charging stations at more accessible locations, including workplaces, public spaces, multi-unit dwellings etc.

Consider All Transportation Needs & Options

- Make transit systems everywhere more reliable and increase the frequency of both bus and train service.

- Provide more furniture and other amenities (e.g. benches, signage, lighting, bus shelters) at transit stations.

- Ensure fares are not a burden on low- and moderate-income families.

- All mass transit should be free (or at least use a single payment system). Discount fares for low income people and the RIDE.

- Multiple modes of transportation that could share infrastructure (i.e., charging stations).

- Make real-time transit information available and accurate and services more responsive to the daily needs of the riders, based on fluctuations in weather and time of year.

- Give buses and shuttles priority or dedicated lanes so they can move even when there is traffic congestion.

- Address truck and freight traffic – switch to electric.

- Transition transit buses and school buses to electricity and/or cleaner alternative fuels and use them interchangeably (i.e. make school buses available for other uses in off hours).

- Address other transportation sector emissions (e.g., aviation fuels) and consider other clean fuels such as hydrogen and biofuels.

- Expand the commuter rail to other parts of the states and invest in the regional rail system

Detailed Comments: Engagement & Transparency

- Be transparent and demonstrate efficient use of public funds through publicly accessible data. Track investments on a public website that ensures language access.

- Engage and collaborate with all sectors and populations.

- Inform the public about the rationale for any and all TCI-related programs.

- Work "from the ground up" and consider community impacts.

- Keep people informed before implementing changes. If people do not have a chance to weigh in, TCI is taxation without representation.

- Improve outreach: provide public bus and train schedules in meeting notices and make sessions more accessible to the elderly, immigrants, etc.

- Have childcare and interpreter services at public meetings; advertise on radio and in community and local newspapers.

- Commit to an advisory committee or oversight board that includes environmental, health and transportation agency personnel, community groups, legislative representatives, environmental justice (EJ) community leaders, elder advocates, etc. to monitoring program implementation, enforcement, and spending.

- What has been done to engage the poorest, least mobile, least able to adjust?

- Communicate with people where they are by means they are comfortable with, and to groups with vested interests.

- Maintain information sharing with elected officials and the public throughout the process of planning and implementation. Engage legislators to connect with constituents.

- Release details on equity principles.

- Continue dialogue and education partnerships with local environmental groups: focus on public involvement, and provide resources to community partners, such as literature and media on TCI.

- Make public engagement more readily accessible by simplifying the discussion.
- Use creative methods to reach most affected communities (e.g., for many working parents, it is a luxury to be able to attend night meetings).
- Give residents a chance to vote before jurisdictions make program decisions.

Detailed Comments: Environmental, Geographic & Social Equity

Environmental Justice (EJ)

- Allocate certain percentage of funds for communities most impacted by pollution.
- What is the current impact on over-burdened communities and how is it currently addressed?
- Focused air quality improvements in EJ communities: invest in monitors for NOx, CO, and PM2.5.
- Target "hot spots" for reducing air pollution: regions that are near industry, highways.
- Use data from EJ communities to determine where to prioritize investments: high-risk, both urban and rural.
- Provide some mitigation for "climate refugees," victims of environmental justice emergencies?
- Gateway cities and indigenous communities should receive disproportionate investments from TCI proceeds.
- Establish "guard rails" in MOU for equitable spending, with EJ communities prioritized.
- Add commuter rail lines, more stops in EJ communities; make all public transportation more affordable for their residents.
- Address historic burden faced by specific neighborhood – transportation and pollution.

Geographic Considerations

- Coordinate regionally consistent policies and collaborative planning among jurisdictions to maximize limited resources and generate a resilient bipartisan policy framework.
- Set ambitious, but measurable and enforceable goals with clear deadlines, but also include "safety valves" if results fall short of expectations.

- Equity of investments: equitable distribution of funds, consider "transit deserts," equity "weighting" (not just CO_2), broad investments (not just transportation).

- How will the program be fair in different regions? How will spending decisions be made in different parts of the state with different mixes of transportation?

- "Fringe" communities on the outskirts of metro areas are underserved currently. Need to explain benefits.

- Rural areas away from places with strong job markets are being left behind and need to be considered.

- Access to mass transit needs to be expanded and geography needs to be considered: investments in metro Boston area may reach more people, but places without existing transit options do not have any flexibility.

- How geographically specific will modeling results and analyses be? For example, people living outside of major work centers need to drive to commute and may bear more of the burden, even if the net cost/benefit to the state as a whole is positive.

- Geographic distribution is important as there are many parts of the state where people do not have an alternative to driving and cannot afford EVs currently available on the market. How will TCI ensure these already disadvantaged communities aren't left even further behind?

- Need equitable, pre-defined distribution; fear that Boston will get disproportionate share.

- Potential disproportionate effects on rural locations: how the modeling will be done?

- Areas most likely to be negatively impacted (i.e. rural areas, places with limited access to public transit or electric vehicles) should receive targeted investments.

- Rural/urban equity: in certain parts of the state, people depend on personal vehicles for daily life because there are no viable transit options.

- Broadband expansion is important and could help rural areas: increases connectivity, access to job markets, teleworking, and home businesses.

- How will we provide alternatives for aging and rural populations?

Socio-Economic Considerations

- Ensure and expand mobility for all people, regardless of income.

- Address price impacts in low-income communities: early investments there can offset impacts, transit, and infrastructure.

- Find sustainable, dedicated funding sources that don't rely on the gas tax and are not regressive (such as the TCI goal of capping and reducing emissions from transportation and letting the market set a related carbon price).

- Ensure cost-effective options that distribute environmental benefits and financial burdens among both businesses and consumers.

- Consider low- to moderate-income communities in addition to EJ.

- EV ownership is not realistic for many in the state and alternative public transit options need to be made available.

- Gas prices: offset cost in low-income communities.

Detailed Comments: Investments & Complementary Policies

- Ensure TCI is not just CO2 or transportation-focused: consider public health, equity access, land use, infrastructure, natural resources, financing (and other mechanisms to support goals).

- Ensure that TCI revenue stays with transportation.

- Include non-transportation investments that assist with access and mobility (i.e., broadband).

- Consider both how investments will be used and the costs/impacts of the program.

- Ensure that fund distribution is subject to a political process and accounts for inequities.

- Do investments stay local? MOU or rule should be specific as to community, county, state.

- How does transportation assistance tie into other state assistance programs (e.g. child care, health, nutrition)?

- EVs for low-income residents; sliding scale EV rebates based on income; reduce cost of commuter rail; free public transit or pay people to take transit.

- Combination of regional, state, and local policies: which issues are best addressed at which level?

- Equity affects all facets of TCI: ensure that it is embedded and memorialized in the final program.

- Out-of-state residents who work and pay taxes in Massachusetts should share program costs.

- Prioritize investments in transit, walking, and biking as alternatives to personal motorized vehicles.

- Address the emissions and impacts of freight, transit, and other vehicles so that improvements are made across all modes of transportation, not just passenger cars.

- Enable efficient transportation of people, movement of goods, and provision of services to support a vibrant regional economy.

- Complementary policies and investments should not just be made in the transportation sector. Integrated approaches considering factors like land use planning, zoning, broadband connectivity, and infrastructure should be used.

- Incorporate smart growth, zoning, and affordable housing policies, and provide cities and towns with incentives for doing so.

- Transit-oriented development: provide incentives and/or partnerships with local communities to improve land use planning and zoning policies, contain sprawl, and encourage affordable housing, shopping, and services on brownfields and abandoned industrial property near transit hubs and bike/walk paths.

- Collateral/unintended consequences: Affordable housing is already a problem. Need to make sure that investments in mass transit consider this and don't exacerbate existing issues and limited access to affordable housing.

- Invest in transportation safety and parking lot lighting.

- Create jobs where people live.

- Offer job alternatives and/or provide training for fossil fuel industry employees.

- Support market transformation and enable new entrants through regional policies that encourage investment in research and development but do not pick winners and losers.

- Be technology- and fuel-neutral, performance-based, and open to ideas, policies, and market forces.

- Be effective and accountable to reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions in line with state goals.

- Consider climate impacts on planning and infrastructure investments. Anticipate the effects of sea level rise, more intense precipitation, and other climate changes.