

Meeting Notes

Date and Time: Wednesday July 13, 2022
6:00-8:00 PM

Notes Taken By: Project Team

Place: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Project No.: 15403.00

Re: Route 128/I-95 Land Use and Transportation Study
Public Informational Meeting #2

Meeting Summary

On July 13, 2022, MassDOT held the second virtual Public Informational Meeting for the Route 128/I-95 Land Use and Transportation Study. At this meeting, the study team provided updates on the project and discussed the Future Conditions and Alternatives Development tasks, in which we are developing land use and transportation infrastructure and policy enhancements to improve mobility in and through the study area. Public attendees were given the opportunity to share comments and ask the team questions at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Notes

Interactive Poll #1 by Liz Williams, MassDOT Project Manager

Liz introduced the polling tool Mentimeter and asked attendees to use one-to-two words to describe their vision for the future of Route 128/I-95. The results of the poll question are attached at the end of the document.

Zoom Overview by Makaela Niles, MassDOT

Makaela provided an overview of zoom, how to use closed captioning, and how to raise hands and ask questions. Participants were asked to state their names prior to saying question/comment and asked to share only one question/comment at a time. Participants were also notified that the meeting was being recorded.

Agenda, Project Overview and Public Meeting #1 Recap by Liz Williams, MassDOT Project Manager

Liz provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, which is included below:

- › Welcome
- › Public Meeting #1 Recap
- › Future Conditions Review
- › Issues, Opportunities & Constraints
- › Alternatives Development
- › Next Steps
- › Public Comment

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Liz presented the project overview, which will establish the future land use, housing, and economic development assumptions along the corridor. The project will also develop and analyze alternatives, present recommendations, and develop an implementation plan.

Liz provided an overview of the study process and outreach phases. The study process is as follows:

- › Task 1: Study Area Goals and Objectives, Evaluation Criteria, Public Participation Plan
- › Task 2: Existing Conditions & Documenting Relevant Efforts
- › Task 3: Future Year No-Build Conditions & Issues Identification
- › Task 4: Alternatives Development
- › Task 5: Alternative Analysis
- › Task 6: Recommendations & Implementation Plan
- › Task 7: Draft and Final Report

Liz provided an overview of the first public meeting and reviewed the responses from that meeting. At the first public meeting, 39% of attendees found that improving access, safety, and mobility was the most important goal followed by contributing to environmental and health benefits. The first meeting attendees also said the biggest challenges in the area are lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and congestion on local roads and highways.

2040 Future Conditions Review by Niki Hastings and Kathleen Keen, VHB Project Consultants

Niki presented the elements of the 2040 Future Conditions Review:

- › Land Use and Economic Conditions
- › Stakeholder Focus Groups
- › Travel Demand Forecasting
- › Future Transportation Conditions
- › Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Niki presented on economic conditions and trends impacting the study area. This covered strong job growth expected to continue, high competition with Boston lab space, short- and long-term inflation that may impact development pace, and low housing production and increasing demand.

Niki presented on stakeholder focus group feedback. Takeaways included an unmet demand for all types of housing, especially multifamily housing, observed resistance to housing development, and potential solutions to encourage housing developments in the study area.

Niki presented on research conducted to establish future land use projections and definition of the no-build condition that alternatives will be compared against. Based on coordination with study area municipalities and MassDOT, the 2040 future conditions are expected to include 17 developments identified in the study area with over 6,000,000 square feet of space. Most developments are anticipated to be laboratory or office space clustered in western Waltham.

Niki presented on travel demand forecasting. CTPS maintains the statewide travel demand model that forecast interaction between demand from land use and supply from roadways and transit networks. The model indicates a 16% household growth and 4% employment growth to 2040 in the study area.

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Niki presented the comparison of CTPS projections and land use research. The model was found to underestimate growth compared to the existing developments mentioned earlier. Manual adjustments to the model to account for these developments results in 8% employment growth and translates to increased traffic demand on study area roadways. The highest traffic volume increases are expected approaching and leaving Waltham in the weekday morning and evening peak hours respectively, which corresponds to commuters accessing the commercial development in the area.

Niki presented on factors that could impact the traffic projections. These include the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on transportation demands due to telework, employment density shifts, housing production, and policy.

Kathleen presented on planned infrastructure investments. Investments include improvements to 6 of the 8 interchanges in the study area, pedestrian and bike infrastructure improvements, and transit system accessibility upgrades on the MBTA Green Line and Commuter Rail. Even with these investments there will still be a strain on the roadways.

Kathleen presented on the 2040 traffic operational analysis. Operations analysis shows that the Route 128/I-95 mainline and ramps will continue to degrade and congestion is anticipated to worsen. Kathleen provided an overview of the different level of service (LOS) categories and reviewed maps of existing and future LOS at the study area intersections. LOS in the northern and southern parts of the study area may worsen slightly, but in Waltham operations are projected to degrade more noticeably. Based on the analysis, 13 of the 30 signalized study area intersections and several unsignalized study area intersections will operate at LOS E or F for at least one peak hour during the 2040 future conditions. Unaddressed this could lengthen peak periods and extend congestion to the local roadways.

Kathleen presented on future transit and active transportation conditions. These include commuter rail station improvements, the green line transformation project, bus network redesign and bus on shoulder screening for Route 128/I-95. There are also 10 planned improvements for pedestrian/bike paths. These mostly focus on closing gaps in existing east-west paths, so there is still a lack of north-south connections.

Issues, Opportunities, & Constraints and Interactive Poll #2 by Niki Hastings, VHB Project Consultant

Niki introduced the review of issues, opportunities, and constraints and discussed two general themes that were observed across the study area. The first theme is the reliance on single-occupant vehicles. This leads to operational and safety issues, is impacted by limited non-auto mode alternatives and impacts public health outcomes. Opportunities to improve are enhancing transit service, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and policies that encourage non-auto modes of transportation. The second theme is land use evolution. There is a significant increase in job offerings that's projected to continue but the housing growth is not increasing at the same rate causing increased traffic to the area. Opportunities to address this include policy/zoning changes and siting/connecting housing near job centers.

Niki presented Mentimeter Poll #2 which asked attendees to rank the study area goals in order of importance. The results of the poll question are attached at the end of the document.

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Alternatives Development and Interactive Poll #3 by Niki Hastings and Kathleen Keen, VHB Project Consultants
Niki introduced the alternatives process:

- › Long List of Ideas
- › Develop Alternatives
- › First-Level Screening
- › Subset of Targeted Alternatives
- › Detailed Analysis
- › Short-, mid-, long-term action plan

Niki discussed the start of the alternatives development process which includes developing a preliminary list of ideas based on existing and future conditions, input from the Working Group, discussions with MassDOT and MBTA, and input from public. Over 100 ideas were generated and used to develop about 80 alternatives broken down into land use/economic development, transportation, and environmental options.

Niki reviewed land use and economic development. These alternatives include policy-based and infrastructure-based improvements that try to improve access to jobs, multimodal mobility and accessibility, and open space access.

Kathleen reviewed preliminary vehicle alternatives. These alternatives build upon planned investments and include improving interchanges to reduce congestion and improve safety, implementing managed lanes, improving local intersection, and integrating technology solutions.

Kathleen discussed preliminary transit alternatives. Transit alternatives include improving service and frequency, adding multimodal hubs to provide bus and rail access, and allowing busses to use the Route 128/I-95 shoulder.

Kathleen discussed preliminary active transportation alternatives. These focus on improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create north-south connections and bike share systems to provide more access to active transportation.

Kathleen discussed preliminary general transportation alternatives. These look on a broader scale such as creating new connections along Route 128, improvements to drainage, shoulders, sound barriers, and guardrails, and connectivity to transit stations.

Niki discussed preliminary environmental alternatives. Some previous alternatives focus on reducing congestion which can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but there are also more direct environmental alternatives. These include water quality improvements, reduction of impervious areas, and mitigating flood hazards.

Niki reviewed the alternatives next steps. The study team is working on first-level screenings to determine feasibility, potential immediate or near-term recommendations, and whether to advance or discard each option.

Niki presented Mentimeter Poll #3 which asked attendees to rank importance of investment in each transportation mode. The results of the poll question are attached at the end of the document.

Next Steps by Niki Hastings, VHB Project Consultant and Liz Williams, MassDOT Project Manager

Niki discussed the next steps for the Project, including finalizing alternatives first-level screening, packaging the alternatives into scenarios, and starting the alternatives analysis. The next Working Group meeting will review these steps which is targeted for late summer 2022. Alternatives analysis will be completed through the fall, and the final Working Group and

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public meetings targeted for late fall of this year. A draft report is aimed to be available for public comment in winter 2023, and final report to wrap up in spring of 2023.

Liz discussed opportunities to access project information, including the MassDOT project website and virtual room that includes comment and mapping tools.

Public Comments

Makaela opened the meeting for public comments. Makaela provided an overview of how to share questions and comments on the zoom platform and tells attendees that they can share questions either in the chat or virtually raise their hands to verbally ask a question.

Elected Officials

- › City Council President Kathy McMenimen (Waltham): The corridor you have selected will predominately impact the City of Waltham. Regarding this I have two questions: 1) Who will be financing all the infrastructure that will be proposed? 2) What kinds of involvement will be required from the City of Waltham (from the Mayor, members of the City Council, and boards that support the work done by the council)?
 - Liz Williams: The study recommendations are ultimately recommendations. They will not require or mandate anything. The recommendations will be made to a series of partners, including MassDOT, local municipalities, private businesses, and transportation management associations.
- › Select Board Member Laurie Bent (Weston): Weston was recently designated as being in an area with strong connections to transit due to its vicinity to Riverside, though in reality it is not easy to get there. It makes sense to locate housing near transit, but people need to be able to get to the transit stations. Have you been in touch with housing advocates to make sure the goals are realistic?
 - Niki Hastings: I believe you are referring to the Multifamily Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities. We have been in touch with housing advocates to ensure that our alternatives align. Some of our alternatives may increase housing stock, but we also will be including alternatives that make sure people have the connections to access transit stations.
- › City Councilor Pamela Wright (Newton): Mark Development in Newton is reconstructing the Grove Street interchange. Are you guys working in coordination with ongoing work in this area?
 - Niki Hastings: Yes, we are including all upcoming projects in our 2040 Future year analyses, which includes all mitigation as part of private projects.

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Members of the Public

- › **Matt Carty:** Are climate change impacts being considered - by 2040 there will be substantial impacts to food chains/environmental degradation
 - **Liz:** Environmental impacts and sustainability are part of the consideration for alternatives, so when we evaluate the alternatives presented environmental impacts and sustainability will be evaluated. There is ongoing work with our office on climate adaptation and vulnerability assessment of transportation. That study should be released soon, and we hope to include those results.
- › **Matt Carty:** Can we take advantage of assessing tolls during peak times, to encourage people with flexibility to drive off peak? Such tolls are very effective
 - **Liz Williams:** MassDOT released a study recently on tolling and managed lanes, I refer you to that study. I want to note that tolling is an issue decided by the state legislature, but we will take a look at that in our study.
 - **Kathleen Keen:** One of the early alternatives we've looked at includes managed lanes, which includes both tolled and non-tolled lanes. As we screen our alternatives the effect of tolls will be taken into account.
- › **Matt Carty:** Why do so few overpasses across 128 have continuous sidewalks on both the north and south sides?
 - **Kathleen Keen:** Many of these overpasses are dated. There are plans upcoming to reconstruct several overpasses over Route 128/I-95 that will include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, including at Grove Street, Route 117, and Route 2A.
- › **Joel Angiolillo:** I have heard that there are complications with the MCRT crossing Route 128/I-95. Are you able to add any information?
 - **Kathleen Keen:** That study is currently being conducted by DCR which whom we've have been in contact with. DCR has a consultant on board. We do not know about a current issue crossing Route 128/I-95.
- › **Rosemary Ducharme:** You should provide more time for the polling in the future, not enough time was provided. I live on Bacon Street, where someone died recently by traffic. A lot of the currently proposed projects are in wealthier areas, such as Route 2A and Grove Street. These sound like they will make it easier to get into Waltham, but what happens to local streets in Waltham, like Bacon Street, that haven't been improved? In addition to the road issues, housing in Waltham is not affordable.
 - **Niki Hastings:** The lack of affordable housing has come up in the working groups and is something that we will continue to evaluate. One of the study area objectives is to make sure traffic stays on the major corridors to reduce cut-through traffic and impacts on local roadways.
- › **Robert Coleman:** Can you please make available the details of the 17 proposed developments that will result in 8 million sq. ft of new development?
 - **Liz Williams:** That information will be available in the report when it is released publicly at the end of the year.
- › **Anthony Riscolo:** There is currently a lot of traffic in the area of Waltham around Route 20 and Route 117, even during off peak times.
 - **Liz Williams:** The study will hopefully mitigate some of the traffic by providing new opportunities for other modes of travel within the study area.

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- › Robert Coleman: Can you please provide a detailed update on the proposed Route 20/Route 117, Green St., Main St. bridge construction project?
 - Rob Nagi: There is a plan led by private developers to connect the Route 20 rotary with the Route 117 corridor via Green Street. That is not directly part of this project tonight, but it has been considered. It is expected that the final design plans will be submitted to MassDOT later this summer and construction may start next year or the year after. That should provide some relief to residents in the neighborhoods including some restrictions of vehicles driving through on certain streets.
- › Robert Coleman: What is the plan for the rail trail over the railroad bridge?
 - Kathleen Keen: The project is sponsored by DCR and is currently in design. It is our understanding that the MCRT connection over Route 128/I-95 will be separate from the Route 117 bridge. The Route 117 bridge will also include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.
- › Miranda Barrows: There is an existing overpass near the end of the Riverside Station. It looks like it would be great for a shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists. The bridge is currently chained off, are there plans to put this to use?
 - Niki Hastings: The overpass is indeed within our study area, and it is something we are looking at including in our alternatives as a new shared-use path connection to better connect the area with Riverside station
- › Anonymous Attendee: We were asked to prioritize five statements. However, the statements were worded vaguely. Is there any document that elaborates more on each of the five statements?
 - Niki Hastings: There is a written document on the project website and a link to the project website is included in the Zoom meeting chat.
- › Laurie Bent: Can you share your vision about what public transit along the corridor might look like?
 - Liz Williams: My vision for the corridor is frequent, reliable service that gets people where they need to go safely and conveniently. There are different alternatives to improve existing transit service and make sure that transit service is well connected and can get around or mitigate some of the congestion we are seeing.
 - Niki Hastings: The transit connections should serve all parts of the study area and not just bring people to and from Boston.
- › Robert Coleman: Are you considering any connector transit route from the north end of the study area to the south end of the transit area?
 - Kathleen Keen: The alternatives consider how a continuous north to south connection could be made, this could be single or multiple routes, and how to best incorporate existing infrastructure.
- › Richard Kovalcik: Any tolling is just going to lead people to use side roads off of Route 128/I-95 and would probably backfire.
- › Anonymous Attendee: Does allowing all private funding for 1265 project give the city residents a say in it? at their last meeting, they said "it's a done deal" so it sounds like none. why does Waltham over build everything?
 - Rob Nagi: The projects that are proposed go before the Waltham City Council and have opportunity for public input through the public review process.

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- › Beth Peterson: Can I just second Anthony Riscolo's comments? And no, you don't feel our pain between Route 20 and Route 117.
- › Anonymous Attendee: Will there be a way to connect Lexington better to the Concord commuter rail station?
 - Kathleen Keen: We are considering several alternatives that improve transit and provides connections to existing commuter rail stations. All alternatives will be screened to find the best combinations.
 - Niki Hastings: Our study area is looking at the stations in Waltham and Weston, so the Concord commuter rail might be a little farther west of the study area, but we are looking at connections within the study area.
- › Rich Kelleher: I live in Waltham on Lincoln St along 95, close to Trapelo Road, old exit 28 and am curious if there have been any sound barrier studies done for this area and my street?
 - Liz Williams: I don't think any sound barriers have been looked at recently. I think some sound barriers will be included in the I-90/I-95 interchange bridge replacement project.
- › Anonymous Attendee: I was surprised that equity wasn't mentioned in the comments from panel on tolling.
 - Liz Williams: Social equity will be one of the measures that we use to evaluate alternatives. We are familiar with the equity considerations associated with managed lanes, so those will be taken into consideration.
- › Susan Barrett: How do you see the recommendations moving forward once MassDOT/VHB is done with this study (i.e. Regional TDM, transit enhancements, etc.) Thanks!
 - Liz Williams: The recommendations will be to MassDOT and to all other entities. We can work with MassDOT internally for those recommendations. For other recommendations we have a very active working group including municipal and elected official and representatives from business organizations. We will be talking strategically with the members of the working group on how to move forwards as we're finishing the study.
- › Mayor Jeannette McCarthy: There are some sound barriers proposed in Waltham as well as part of the bridge replacement project on Route 117.
 - Rob Nagi: There is a proposal to construct a sound barrier between Route 20 and Route 117 on the east side of Route 128/I-95.

Liz Williams: You can email me if anyone has additional questions or comments

Closing remarks by Liz Williams.

After the meeting, attendees were asked two follow-up questions: Was the purpose and intent of the public meeting clearly explained and how was the quality and clarity of the information provided. The results of the poll question are attached at the end of the document.

Meeting Attendees

MassDOT

- › Makaela Niles
- › Liz Williams
- › Charlene Job
- › Dan Fielding

Project Team

- › Niki Hastings
- › Kathleen Keen
- › Rob Nagi
- › Matt Duranleau

Elected Officials

- › Mayor Jeannette McCarthy (Waltham)
- › City Councilor Kathy McMenimen (Waltham)
- › City Councilor Pamela Wright (Newton)
- › Select Board Member Laurie Bent (Weston)

Working Group Members

- › Mayor Jeannette McCarthy (Waltham)

Attendees

- › Megan Speed
- › Robert Coleman
- › Sonja Wadman
- › Laurel Carpenter
- › Susan Barrett
- › Beth Peterson
- › Joel Angiolillo
- › Martha Creedon
- › Barbara Jacobs
- › Mark Johnston
- › Leo Keightley
- › Adetoyin Olaoye
- › Miranda Barrows

Attendees (cont.)

- › Barbara Sird
- › Augustin Manyowashington
- › William Duncan
- › Douglas Waybright
- › John Dieckmann
- › Rosemary Ducharme
- › Jennifer Fitzsimmons-Gauger
- › Ben Fields
- › Michael Patnode
- › Jeannine Brannelly
- › Curtis Schroeder
- › Christine O'Neill
- › John Woods
- › Carol Watts
- › Rich Kelleher
- › Michael Cramer
- › Concetta Boyce
- › Wallace Go
- › Richard Canale
- › Richard Kovalcik
- › Lucia Dolan
- › Christin Grygorcewicz
- › Susan Wunderlee
- › Steven Karel
- › Anthony Riscolo
- › Matt Carty
- › Annie Arguello
- › Colette Byrne
- › Carolina Lara
- › J Tang

Route 128/I-95 Public Informational Meeting #2

July 13, 2022

Project Team Poll Questions



Question 1: In 1-2 words, what is your vision for the future of Route 128/I-95?

Respondents: 12



In 1-2 words, what is your vision for the future of Route 128/I-95?

Mentimeter



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Route 128/I-95 Public Informational Meeting #2
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Project Team Poll Questions



Question 2: How would you rank the study area goals in order of importance?

Respondents: 21

| | 1st place | 2nd place | 3rd place | 4th place | 5th place |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All | 12 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Support Strategic Land Use and Economic Vitality | 2 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Advance Social Equity Throughout | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Contribute Environmental and Health Benefits | 4 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| Develop Recommendations with Lasting Benefits | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 4 |

How would you rank the study area goals in order of importance?

Mentimeter



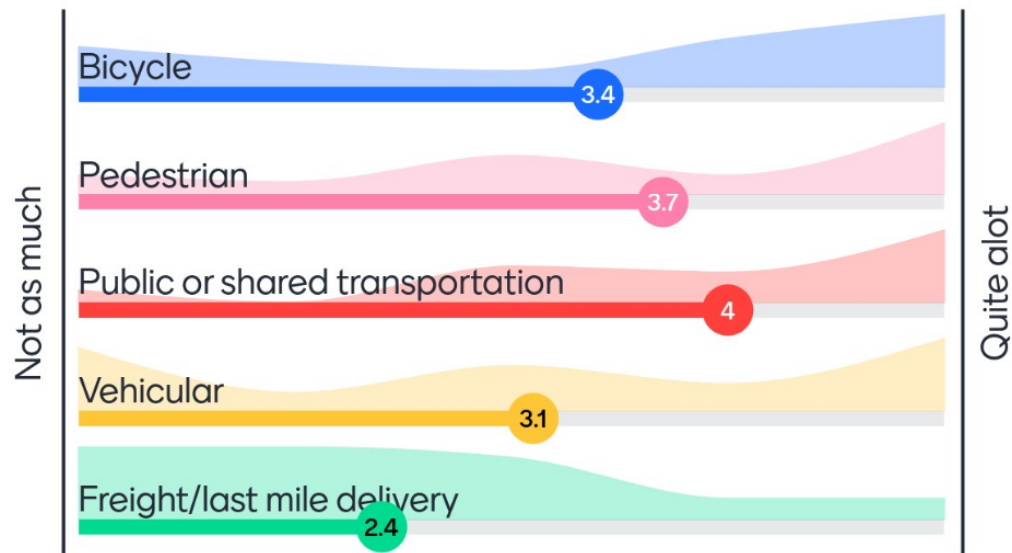
Question 3: How important are the following modal investments in this particular corridor?

Respondents: 25

| Choices | Weighted average | Not as much Quite a lot | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Bicycle | 3.44 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Pedestrian | 3.68 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 11 |
| Public or shared transportation | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 12 |
| Vehicular | 3.12 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Freight/last mile delivery | 2.375 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |

How important are the following modal investments in this particular corridor?

Mentimeter



25

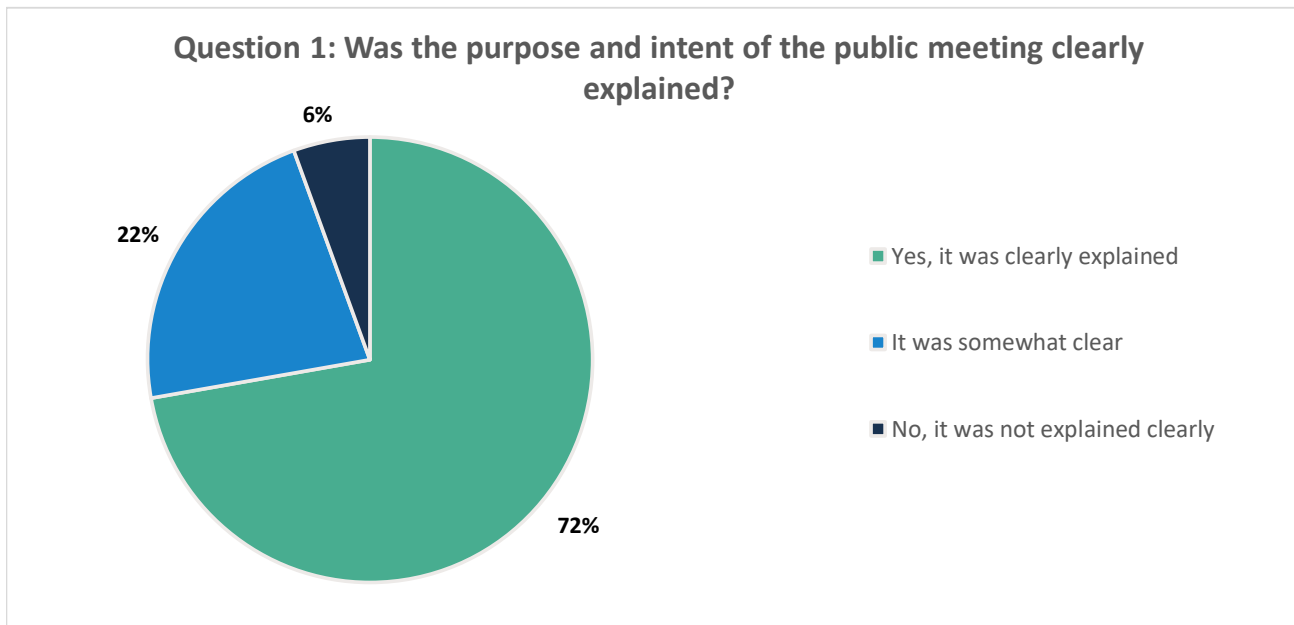


Route 128/I-95 Public Informational Meeting #2
July 13, 2022
MassDOT Poll Questions



Question 1: Was the purpose and intent of the public meeting clearly explained?

| | Responses | Percent of Responses |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Yes, it was clearly explained | 13 | 72% |
| It was somewhat clear | 4 | 22% |
| No, it was not explained clearly | 1 | 6% |
| | 18 | |



Route 128/I-95 Public Informational Meeting #2
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MassDOT Poll Questions



Question 2: How was the quality and clarity of the information provided?

| | Responses | Percent of Responses |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Exceeds expectations | 7 | 39% |
| Meets expectations | 9 | 50% |
| Needs improvement | 2 | 11% |
| | 18 | |

Question 2: How was the quality and clarity of the information provided?

