

# Secretary's Report

November 23, 2020

Stephanie Pollack  
Secretary and CEO



# Welcome New Board Members

This morning Tim Sullivan was sworn in as a member of the FMCB



Brain Lang, already a member of the FMCB, will also join the MassDOT Board



# FY 2021 Budget Update

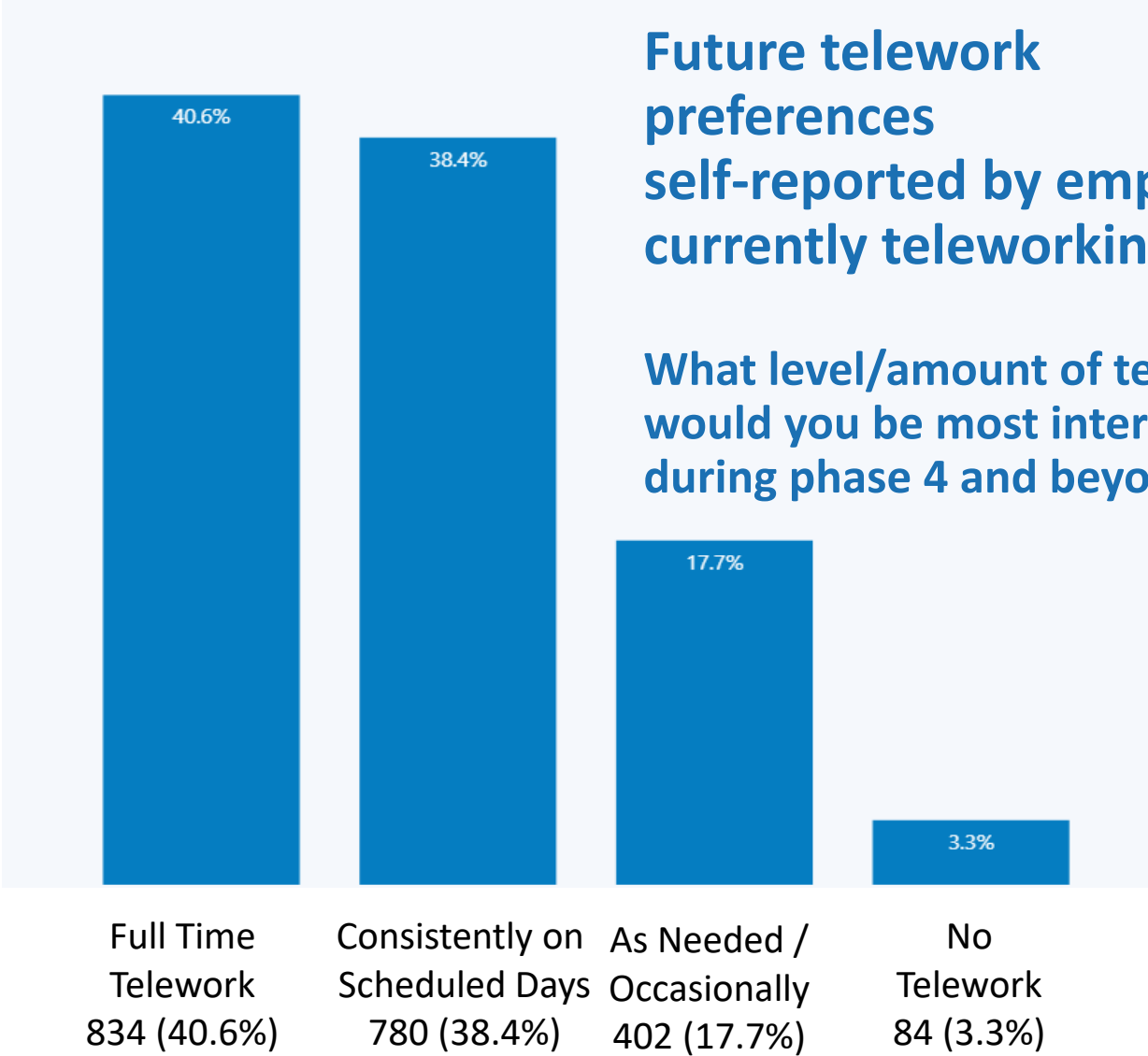
- The Fiscal 2021 Interim Budget expires November 30.
- Both the House and Senate have now passed Fiscal 2021 budgets and a final budget is expected to be worked out soon
- Governor Baker's Revised H 2 Fiscal 2021 funding supports \$385.8 million for MassDOT, \$11 million for the Merit Rating Board, \$90.5 million for the 15 Regional Transit Authorities, and \$127 million in operating assistance for the MBTA (in addition to sales tax transfer.)
  - The House version of the budget has the same transfer numbers except that it reduces the MassDOT transfer for snow and ice and adds in funding for three earmarks
  - The Senate version of the budget has the same transfer numbers as the Governor's Revised H 2, except for \$94 million for the 15 Regional Transit Authorities
- Action is still expected before the session ends on the Transportation Bond Bill proposed by the Baker-Polito Administration during Fiscal 2020



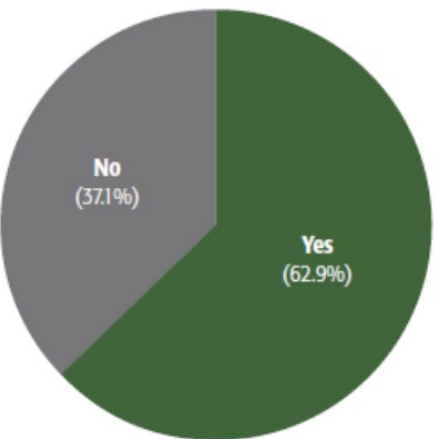
# COVID-19 Updates: MassDOT

- As you will hear in the Human Resources update, over the past seven months about 40% of the MassDOT workforce shifted to telework
- In August MassDOT employees (and other state employees) were told that existing telework schedules would remain in place until the end of the calendar year
- Last week MassDOT employees (and other state employees) were updated and told that (unless otherwise directed by their managers) all staff currently teleworking for part or all of their work schedule will continue to do so until at least the beginning of March 2021
- MassDOT is working on the plan for a gradual return to the workplace for some employees while allowing some who are successfully teleworking to continue doing so at least some of the time; we expect to share a more detailed approach for returning to work in early 2021.

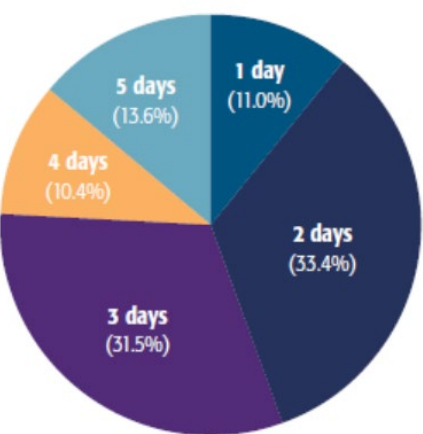
# Like others, MassDOT employees want to continue to telework



In a post-vaccine period, would you prefer to work from home?



If you prefer to work from home in a post-vaccine period, for how many days?



**TELECOMMUTING SURVEY REVEALS POTENTIAL FOR GREATER SHIFT TOWARDS REMOTE WORK AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

By Andrew Mikula

The latest data from the COVID-19 pandemic has led many observers wondering whether working from home will increase in popularity after the crisis subsides. With traffic congestion hampering economic productivity and contributing to air and noise pollution, public officials may look for ways to encourage businesses to allow working from home in greater numbers going forward. However, the attitude of the public towards such a shift in commuting patterns requires further evaluation, and last month Pioneer Institute issued a survey aiming to capture these attitudes.

**The survey questions**

- Do you currently work from home?
- What do you like best about working from home?
- What do you like least about working from home?
- Prior to the pandemic, how long was your commute (one way total)?
- Do you find that you get more or less done when you work from home?
- In a post-vaccine period, how would you attitude towards returning to the workplace compare to working remotely?
- During a non-vaccine period, if you were able to come back to your workplace, would you?
- In a post-vaccine period, would you prefer to work from home?
- If you replied "yes" to the previous question, how many days a week would you prefer to work from home?

**PIERONE INSTITUTE**

May 2020



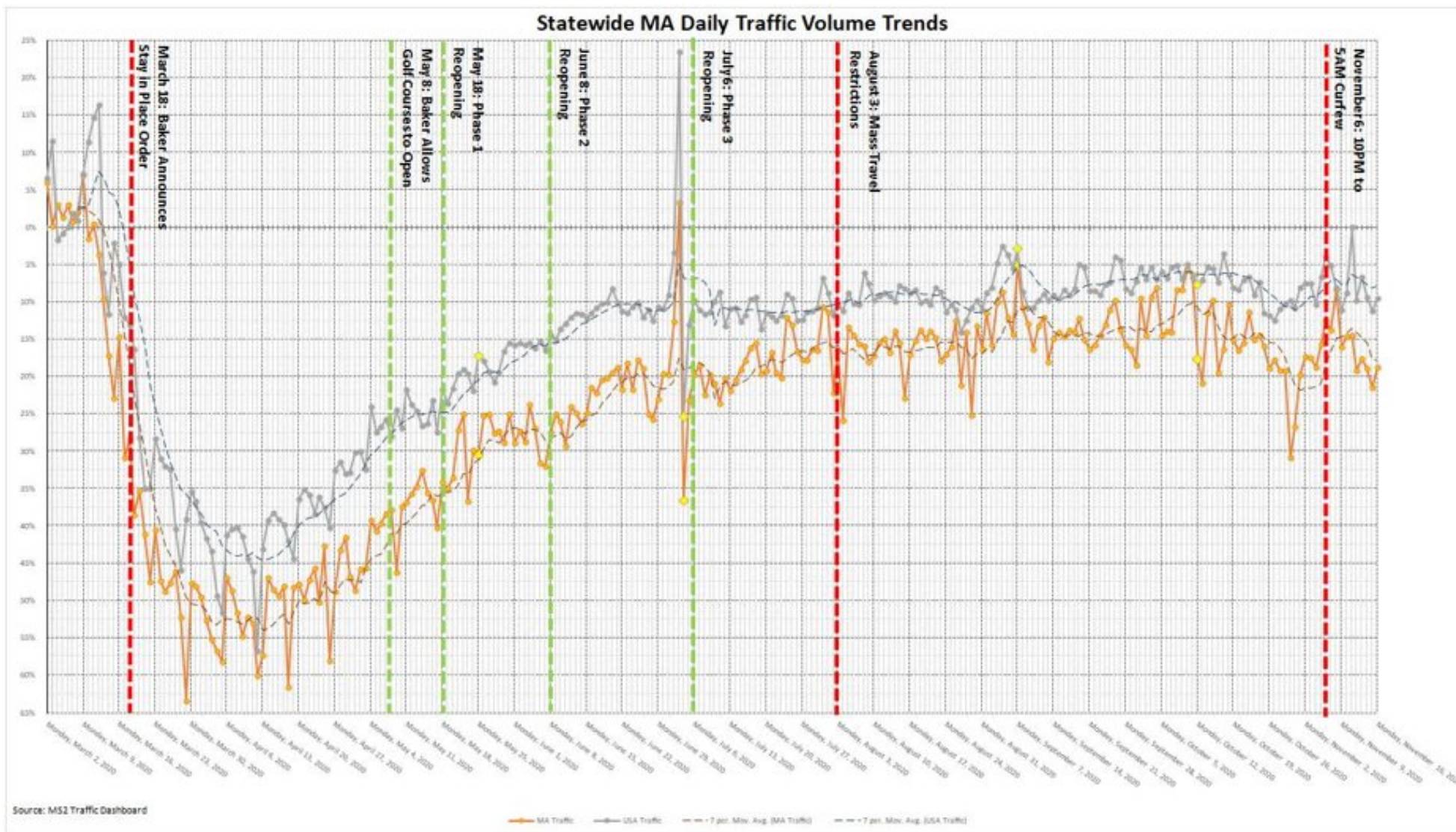
# COVID Updates: Highway construction activities

- Approximately 375 Active MassDOT construction contracts this spring
- Many projects were accelerated
- To date, Highway Division in FY 2021 has 111 contracts noticed to proceed.





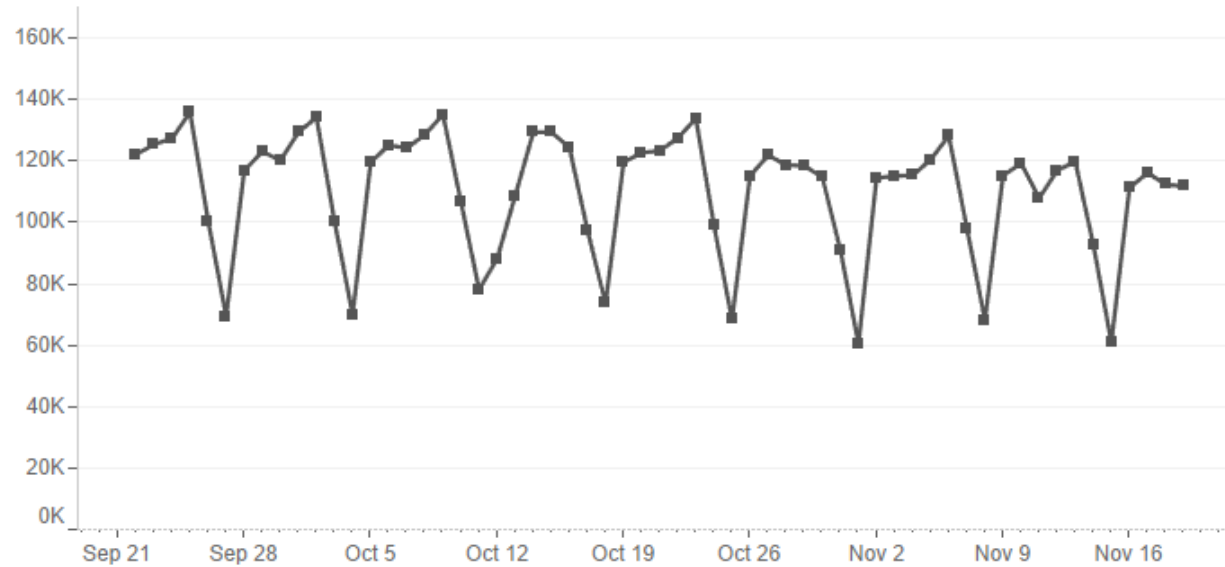
# COVID Updates: Traffic is not continuing to increase



- Statewide daily traffic volumes dipped again from last week
- All districts are below 2019 levels again

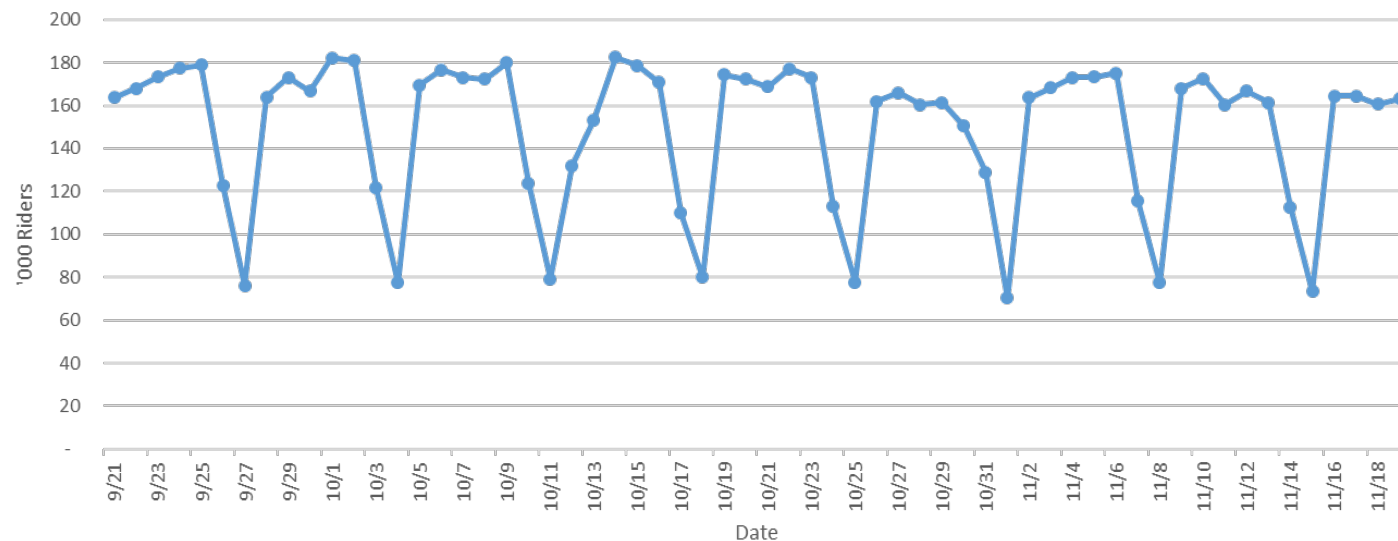
# COVID Updates: MBTA transit ridership may also be declining

Total Gated Station Validations (last 60 days)



Ridership across all modes was lower this week than last week

Total Daily Bus Riders (last 60 days)

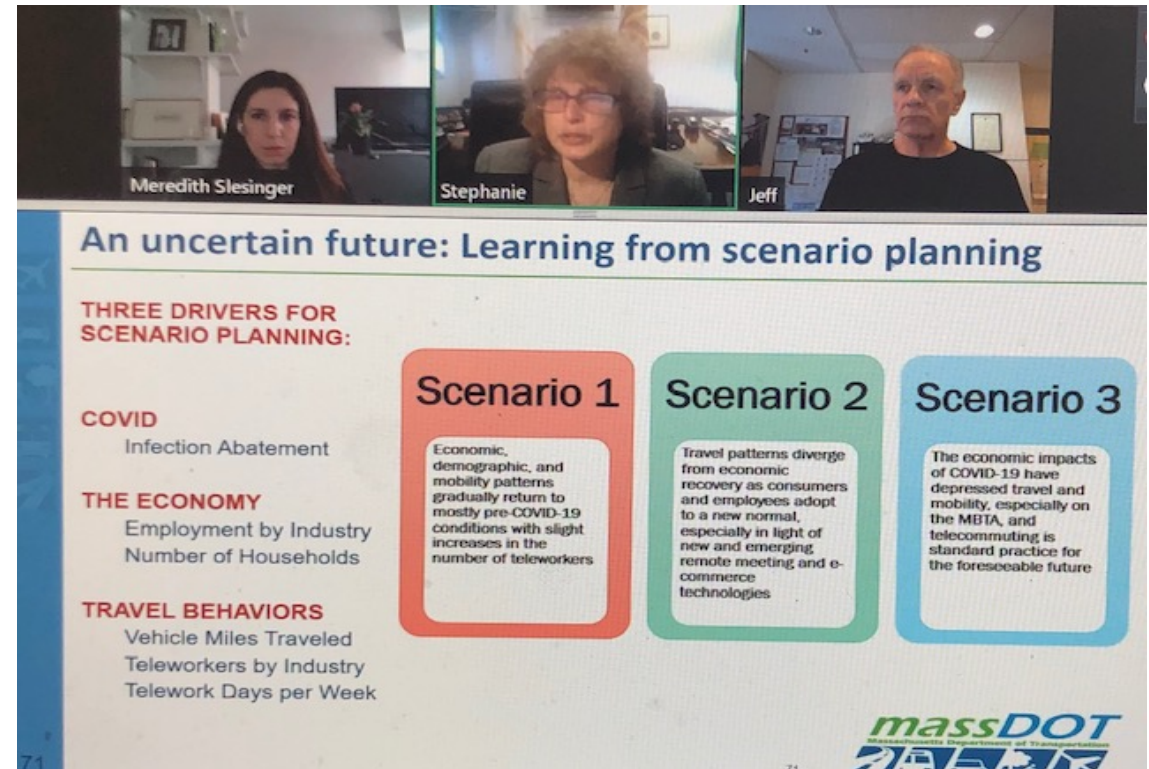




# Employee Town Halls have been successful

Series of virtual employee Town Halls has begun

- Showcase work of Divisions
- Discuss new initiatives
- Overview being taken for COVID-19 prevention
- Preview Fiscal 2021 budget
- Answer employee questions about the work ahead, etc.



Over 700 employees have participated so far.

# Shared Winter Streets & Spaces Funding

- The Shared Streets & Spaces Program provided a total of \$10.2 million to fund 124 projects in 103 municipalities
- On October 22, Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced \$10 million in new funding for Shared Winter Streets and Spaces grants from \$5,000 to \$500,000 to improve plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce
- Five categories of projects will be funded:
  - **Main Streets** - Invest in local downtowns and villages by re-purposing streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and winter programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
  - **Reimagined Streets** - Prioritize safe spaces for people walking and biking by implementing low-speed streets, 'shared streets,' new sidewalks, new protected bike lanes, new permanent off-road trails, new bicycle parking, new crosswalks, traffic-calming measures, and ADA-compliant ramps.
  - **Better Buses** - Establish new facilities for public buses, including but not limited to dedicated bus lanes, traffic-signal priority equipment, and bus shelters.
  - **Shared Mobility** - Support the capital costs of equipment for new bikeshare and micromobility share programs.
  - **Investments in the Future** - Convert temporary projects piloted to become permanent facilities (pilot need not have been funded by MassDOT previously).





# Shared Winter Streets & Spaces Funding

Round	Applications received by:	Notification of awards:
1	December 4th	December 22nd
2	January 5th	February 2nd
3	January 29th	February 26th
4	February 26th	March 26th

Project completion and spending deadline for all four rounds is May 31, 2021.





# Record attendance at 2020 Moving Together Conference

- Virtual conference featured sessions in these categories; Equity Measures, Safety, Mobility in a New Normal, and Project Development & Implementation. Conference: 1,000+ attendees.
- Guest speakers from Massachusetts and other states discussed topics on pedestrian and bike safety as well as inequities in access to transportation.
- Other webinars included virtual tours of sites such as the planned North Adams Adventure Trail and the Coastal Trails Network.

The screenshot shows a presentation slide from the 2020 Moving Together Conference. On the left, a sidebar titled 'Measuring Equity' lists presenters: Greg Sobczynski (MassDOT), Alissa Zimmer (MassDOT), Maria de la Luz Lobos Martinez (LivableStreets Alliance), and Raul Gonzalez (Metropolitan Area Plannin...). The main content area is titled 'Take action! Engage the community members' and lists three categories of actions: 'Collect' (Conduct surveys, Record observations), 'Inform' (Promote public meetings & campaigns, Educate public), and 'Engage' (Involving people in the process, Taking action). To the right of the text is a photo of three people at a 'LivableStreets' booth. The bottom of the slide features a green bar with the text '2020 Moving Together Conference' and the page number '27'. On the far right, there is a vertical strip of four video call windows showing participants.

**Measuring Equity**

**Presenters**

- Greg Sobczynski  
MassDOT
- Alissa Zimmer  
MassDOT
- Maria de la Luz Lobos  
Martinez  
LivableStreets Alliance
- Raul Gonzalez  
Metropolitan Area Plannin...

**Take action!**  
**Engage the community members**

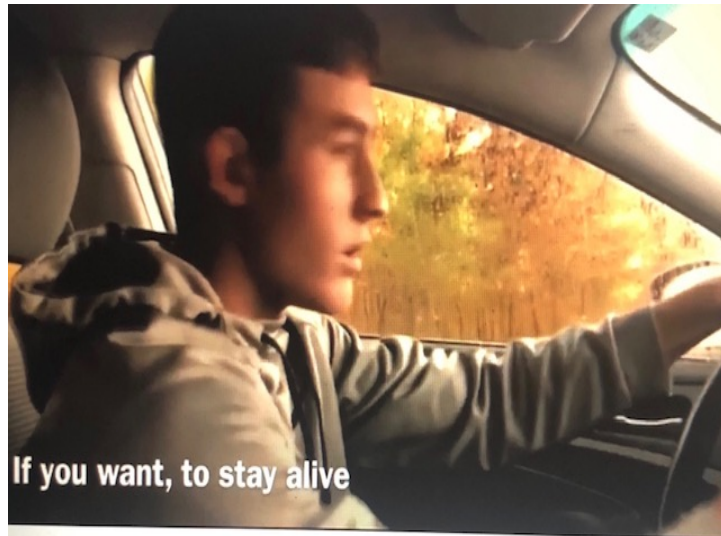
**Street Ambassadors**

- Collect
  - Conduct surveys
  - Record observations
- Inform
  - Promote public meetings & campaigns
  - Educate public
- Engage
  - Involving people in the process
  - Taking action

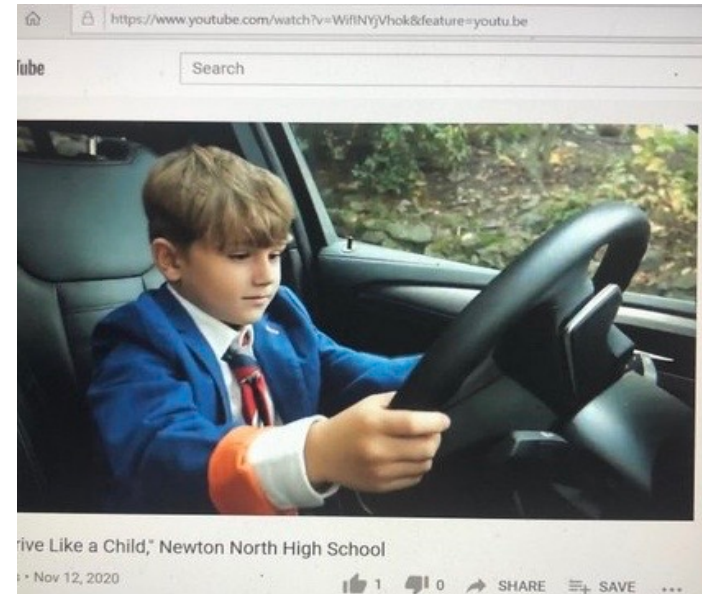
2020 Moving Together Conference 27

# High School Safety Video Contest

- Annual Safe Streets Smart Trips High School Video Contest.
- 30 video submissions and six semi-finalist videos shown during virtual 2020 Moving Together Conference. Theme: state's new Hands-Free Law which took effect in February 2020. (Maynard High's "Driver's Rap" and Newton North's "Don't Drive Like a Child" below.)



ver's Rap", Maynard High School



# High School Video Contest Honors

High School Name	Student Names	Video Name
Newton North High School: Honorable Mention honors.	Bella Rousseau and Matilda Neuffer	Don't Drive Like a Child
Maynard High School: Runner-up honors.	Evelynn Hickey	Keeping You and Others Safe
Lexington High School: Grand Prize honors.	Avi Spitz	Why Risk It?
Maynard High School: Honorable Mention honors.	Ronan Jeanotte and Kyle Monahan	Driver's Rap
Nauset Regional High School, North Eastham: Runner-up honors.	Kyleigh Shelley and Cole Jackett	Just 1 Mistake
Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, Palmer: Grand Prize honors.	Nicolas Hein, Austin Tocci, and Michael Gilbert	The Call Can Wait



# MassDOT/MBTA Performance Recognition Ceremony

MASSDOT/MBTA TEAM

**Team Award**

**Shared Streets and Spaces Team**

**Nominated by:**  
Katherine Fichter

**massDOT**  
TEAM AWARD

*"A large team of committed MassDOT/MBTA employees have worked together with dedication and commitment to create - from scratch - the Shared Streets & Spaces municipal funding program. The program provides funding to cities and towns to make changes to their streets and other public spaces in response to the Covid-19 health crisis. These funds are being used to provide more and safer streets for walkers, cyclists, and schoolchildren; to provide new areas for outdoor dining and commerce; and to support better bus facilities. The program is enormously popular with cities and towns, and applications have been submitted and funded from all over the Commonwealth."*

HIGHWAY DIVISION RECIPIENTS

**Award Recipient:**

Administrative Assistant,  
**Nichole Anderson**

**Nominated by:**  
Lee Ann Wilson, Sharika Thompson and Lori Karas

*"Nichole brings a positive, can-do attitude to work every day...When the pandemic hit and we were asked to telecommute, Nichole took on a very difficult assignment with the [DUA]...[In July] Nichole willingly accepted the role of Team Captain, managing 5 employees on the ENOC project. This project and its content was new to Nichole and her team. Nichole was instrumental in welcoming her team and offering support while they maneuvered various training resources."*

- Virtual ceremony on Friday, November 20.
- Individuals and 13 teams honored for going “above and beyond.”



## \$2.42 Million in IRAP Grants

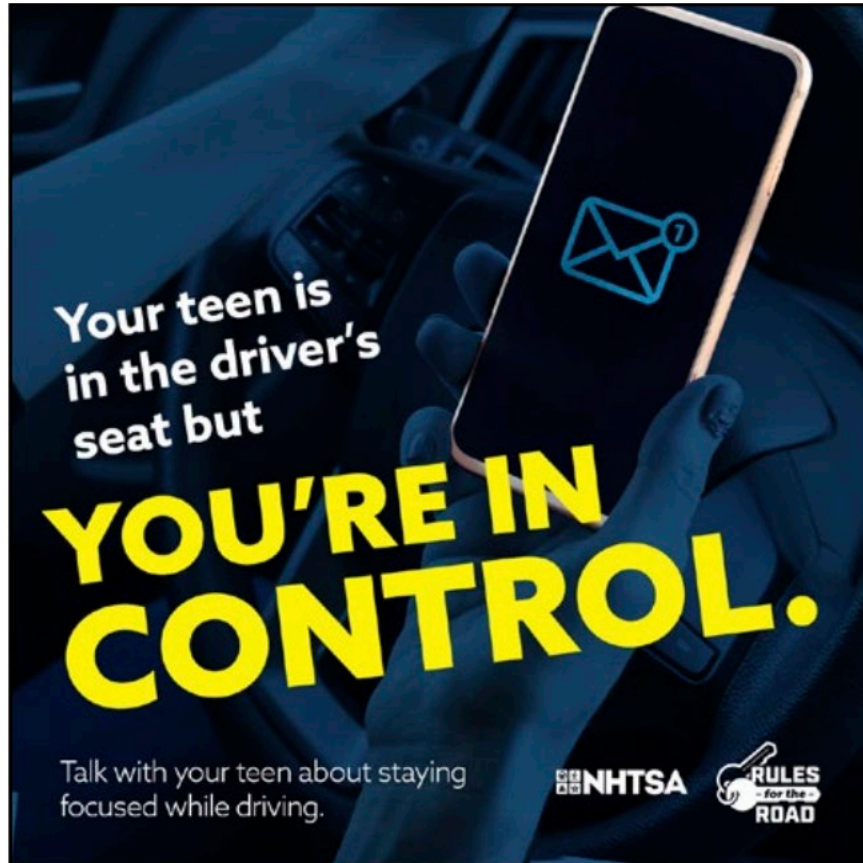
- On Tuesday, November 17, Lt. Governor Polito joined MassDOT officials and Mayor Dan Rivera in Lawrence for a groundbreaking ceremony at a location which will benefit from receiving an **Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP)** grant. (Photo to the left.)
- IRAP is a competitive state-funded public/private partnership program providing financial assistance for industry-based rail infrastructure access projects.
- Applicants must match public funds with private funds, with private funds paying at least 40% of a project's total cost, and several of the six awardees will match more than the required minimum.
- Six grants were announced totaling more than \$2.42 million: Broco Oil Inc., Leominster Packaging & Warehousing, Lynch Materials, Old Boston Road Recycling, City of Lawrence, and United Material Management.

# Registry Continues to Innovate in Response to the Pandemic

- At onset of pandemic, RMV encouraged customers to complete eligible transactions online, and as a result, license transactions that were completed online in Fiscal Year 2020 increased 50% over Fiscal Year 2019.
- RMV continues to serve customers by appointment only and appointments may be made up to 14 business days in advance.
- RMV extending designated Wednesday appointment hours for customers 75 years of age or older through November and December at 17 locations.
- Offer that started in June continues: renew for a “standard” MA driver’s license or ID card online through the end of the State of Emergency, and get an upgrade to a REAL ID credential if customer chooses in 2021 at no additional charge.
- More information: [www.mass.gov/RMV](http://www.mass.gov/RMV)



# Teen Safety Awareness



- National Teen Driver Safety Week was in October.
- The greatest dangers for teen drivers include alcohol, inconsistent or no seat belt use, distracted and drowsy driving, speeding and number of passengers.
- In U.S., motor vehicle crashes leading cause of death for teens aged 15 to 18 years old. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for the most recent year, there were 2,247 people killed in crashes involving a teen driver. Of these crashes, 755 deaths were the teen drivers themselves.
- Parents-talk to teens- discuss rules they need to follow to stay safe.

# Mass Central Rail Trail Feasibility Study

- Mass Central Rail Trail Feasibility Study completed, released on October 27 for 30-day public comment:  
[mass.gov/mass-central-rail-trail-feasibility-study](http://mass.gov/mass-central-rail-trail-feasibility-study)
- Study of 68.5 mile mid-state section of the Mass Central Rail Trail between Belchertown and Hudson.
- Current ownership, condition, and existing use of the original railroad corridor varies.
- Some sections shared-use path; other sections public ownership, active railroads, private ownership. (Original railbed converted to different uses.)
- Vision: to convert as much of corridor as possible to connect with other pathways making for an east-west, off-road, shared-use path/greenway connecting Northampton to Boston.



# Allston I-90 Multimodal project was discussed in committees





# Critical path for the project going forward

- All of the time and attention focused on selecting a Preferred Alternative for the throat may have created the mis-impression that the “critical path” for the project simply involves identifying a Preferred Alternative
- In order for the project to proceed, MassDOT must take the lead on the following activities over the next 6-8 months (and beyond)
  - Advancing project design and analysis and moving the project through the NEPA and MEPA processes
  - Accelerating development of a Multimodal Transportation Mitigation Plan
  - Accelerating development of a Finance Plan in advance of board approval of the FY22-26 CIP/STIP
- In addition, MassDOT has initiated development of a less expensive No Build that could be built in a shorter time frame and provide 10-15 more years of service life for the viaduct. This near term solution could create the time to build a true public consensus and prepare the MBTA for potential long-term service disruptions and might be necessary to undertake a potentially lengthy permitting process that would be necessary should the Modified All-At-Grade alternative become the preferred alternative