



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: November 11, 2017

Transit:

- Over the next several weeks MassDOT Transit staff will be meeting with each of the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) as part of a process known as "Program Previews". These individual meetings will provide an opportunity for an in depth discussion of each RTA's operational and financial performance, as well as its goals for the coming year and any longer term projects. These meetings are timed to occur after the RTAs' financial audits have been completed, but while their budgets are still being developed. Among the topics to be reviewed are:
 - *Metrics.* The RTAs regularly report key metrics such as ridership and passenger trips. MassDOT staff analyzes this data and will be discussing with each RTA overall trends and the differences between RTAs.
 - *Any increase or decrease in Revenue Anticipation Notes (RANs).* RANs are an important cash flow device for the RTAs, but an increase can indicate an expansion of the operating budget that may or may not be supported by future revenues.
 - *Use of Federal funds.* Most RTAs receive Federal funds that can be used for capital or for operating expenses. This is an area where close coordination is helpful since an RTA's choice may affect the amount of additional operating or capital support that MassDOT will be asked to provide.
 - *Capital projects.* Accurate information on the RTAs' capital assets and needs is essential to MassDOT's preparation for the new MassDOT Capital Investment Program.
 - *New initiatives.* While local assessments are constrained by Proposition 2 ½ and state contract assistance is essentially flat, RTAs are encouraged to fund new services through cost savings and to consider fare increases and other new revenues.
 - *Comprehensive Regional Transit Plans* Following on the Commonwealth's adoption of a "Forward Funding" process, each RTA developed a Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan with prioritized

initiatives. The Program Previews will be an opportunity to identify progress.

Rail:

- MassDOT has filed an application for Federal freight rail funding under the Federal “Infrastructure for Rebuilding America” (INFRA) grant program. The application seeks \$10.8M in federal funds to upgrade more than 31 miles of rail and twenty bridge structures on the New England Central freight line running from Connecticut to Canada. The Federal share would be matched by \$9.6M in private funds and \$9.6M in state funds. The upgrade would increase the weight limits of the line from 263,000 lbs. to the national standards of 286,000 lbs. This added capacity would allow shippers and receivers to “max out” the carrying capacity of each rail car and thereby make rail shipping more cost-effective. The upgrade would complete the Massachusetts section of the 286,000 lb. rail network that is being built in Vermont and Connecticut.
- MassDOT has issued a Request for Proposals seeking an operator for the Cape Main and other lines that MassDOT owns in the southeastern part of the state. MassDOT has held a site visit with several prospective bidders and is following a procurement schedule intended to assure prospective bidders with full information and to provide customers with continuous and reliable service, notwithstanding any transition. MassDOT has also indicated to the current operator that a short extension would be considered. The current operating agreement has been in effect for 10 years, but has been expanded over that period as newly acquired lines (ex: Framingham Secondary) were added to it.
- MassDOT Rail staff has drafted a new set of procedures that will govern several of its lines, particularly those that are currently the subject of the above referenced RFR. The new procedures are to be ready for adoption by December 1.
- MassDOT Rail will be discussing Western Massachusetts passenger rail services with Connecticut DOT. Connecticut is sponsoring new passenger rail service between New Haven and Springfield in May. Since some of the service would be covered by the existing Knowledge Corridor Agreement between Amtrak, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont, an amendment to that agreement may be appropriate.
- MassDOT has filed Notices of Intent (NOIs) for two locations (New Bedford and Berkley) for South Coast Rail, Phase 1. Two more filings are expected next week.