



Congestion Study

MassDOT Board of Directors
November 19, 2018



Background: August 6 Veto of H. 4831 on Congestion Pricing

While automobile congestion is a problem on the roads of the Commonwealth, lowering tolls for drivers on the small number of roadways with tolls is not an effective response to road congestion, disadvantages those who must drive during the busiest times to get to work and school, and reduces the revenue available to maintain and upgrade those roadways.

The proposed pilot in H. 4831 would not test congestion pricing—which involves increasing prices to change travel behavior—instead, the pilot seeks to test whether it is technologically feasible to charge different tolls at different times. Such testing is unnecessary; the Commonwealth’s all-electronic tolling system can support different tolls at different times.

Rather than conducting a pilot project, we believe it is most productive to continue to focus on efforts to address congestion by continuing to invest in improving the performance and increasing the core capacity of the MBTA; expanding the reach of the MBTA system via the Green Line Extension; working with Regional Transit Authorities to improve their performance; and investing in Complete Streets and other infrastructure improvements that give people more options for walking and biking. These steps will reduce roadway congestion by giving people better choices, not by raising the tolls those who do not have good alternatives to driving at congested times.

At the same time, however, I have instructed **MassDOT to complete, within 9 months, a comprehensive analysis of when, where and why congestion is getting worse in the Commonwealth and what additional policies and programs should be put in place to address it.**

- Governor Baker



Congestion Study Overview

With consultant support, MassDOT will conduct a series of inquiries coordinated by a cross-functional team from:

- MassDOT Highway
- Office of Intermodal Planning
- Office of Performance Management and Innovation

Will look at opportunities to reduce congestion and improve performance statewide:

- recurring congestion and reliability problems caused by traffic volumes exceeding roadway capacity,
- Incident-driven congestion (caused by crashes)
- Work zone-driven congestion (caused by construction projects)

Staff will return to the Board with conclusions in Spring/Summer of 2019

Congestion Study Purpose

To produce a data driven set of policies, programs, and best practices, MassDOT's cross functional team will conduct a statewide analysis of roadway congestion to better understand:

- When congestion occurs?
- Where congestion occurs?
- Why congestion occurs?

Explore the likely driver of future congestion

- Housing and jobs development?
- Transit Ridership? Freight? ...

Data to be examined includes:

Traffic Volume Data

- Including new/non-traditional data sources (Waze, cell phone, gantry data)

Travel Time Data

Vehicle Miles Traveled Data

RMV Car Registration and Licensing Data

Census and Household Travel Survey Commuting Data

Demographic Data

- Population, Households and Employment

Economic Growth

Transit Ridership

Crash and Incident Data

Freight Volume Data (Rail and Roadways)

Key Study Element:

To expedite completion of Congestion Study, MassDOT will build on work it is already doing under a federal Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2)

- In 2017, MassDOT received a federal Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) grant to develop methods to incorporate travel time reliability measures into the planning and programming processes

Under this grant, the vendor has:

- Assessed MassDOT's congestion-related data and tools (e.g., travel time, incident and work zone data)
- Calculated historical congestion and reliability performance
- Developed draft targets for federally required performance measures
- Assessed and visualized congestion, reliability, and queueing on key commute corridors into/out of Boston

This work will be expanded to take a deeper dive into data sources in order to gain a better understanding of the causes of congestion

Congestion Study: Next Steps

- 1) Conduct Analysis – Winter 2018/Spring 2019
- 2) Study Completion – End of April/Early May 2019
- 3) Present Findings - Spring/Summer 2019

Congestion Study

Appendix