



495/METROWEST

PARTNERSHIP

Leaders for Regional Prosperity

July 14, 2015

Mr. Steve Woelfel
MassDOT Representative to CMMPO
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
Union Station, Washington Square
Worcester, MA 01604

Re: Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization's Draft FY2016-2019
Transportation Improvement Program

Dear Mr. Woelfel:

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, please accept the following as our official comments regarding the draft *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* for FFY 2016 to FFY 2019 for the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO).

The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a non-profit advocacy organization serving thirty-five communities, over half a million residents, and an employment base of over \$21 billion per year. The Partnership seeks to address regional needs through public-private collaboration by working to enhance economic vitality, improve quality of life and sustain natural resources. The Partnership focuses on helping to alleviate regional constraints and limitations, and conducts numerous initiatives on transportation, workforce housing, brownfields, and water resources.

With our latest economic analysis, we know that the 495/MetroWest region has continued to grow thanks to a diverse economic base and a high quality of life. While this growth has resulted in opportunities and benefits, the transportation challenges remain. If ignored, these challenges threaten the quality of life and economic wellbeing of a region that has become an economic engine for the Commonwealth. Our regional transportation challenges affect the state's ability to remain economically competitive. These challenges include: increasing traffic congestion, an increase in vehicle miles traveled, highway capacity issues, gaps in public transit coverage, and aging transportation infrastructure. Our 2014 *495/MetroWest Top Ten Transportation Nightmares*, a publicly nominated list, speaks directly to the region's priorities, which span highway, transit, bike and pedestrian needs.

While the CMMPO region includes only seven of the Partnership's thirty-five communities, we greatly appreciate the number of projects included in the Draft TIP which benefit our region. We are pleased to see the advancement of the **Route 9/Lyman St. Intersection and Signal Improvements Project (#604864)** in FY 2016 in Westborough and are hopeful there will be no further delays given that the project was originally scheduled for FY 2015. In addition to this Westborough project, the Partnership strongly supports the inclusion of the following projects:

495/METROWEST PARTNERSHIP

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FY 2016

- #607479 Shrewsbury-Boylston-Northborough Interstate maintenance & Related Work on I-290
- #607176 Shrewsbury-Westborough Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9
- #607764 Shrewsbury - Intersection Signal Improvement at US 20 (Hartford Turnpike) at Grafton Street
- #608060 Gardner - Shrewsbury - Stormwater Improvements Along Route 68/Route 70/Route 146

FY 2017

- #602740 Shrewsbury Resurfacing and related work on Main St., From I-290 ramps easterly to Maple Avenue

FY 2019

- #606125 Upton - Reconstruction of Hartford Avenue north, High Street and Hopkinton Road

While the above mentioned projects are welcome, the drop-off in projects as well as the elimination of statewide funding sources like Bridge Maintenance and CMAQ has not gone unnoticed. The Partnership is concerned about future funding years if the CMMPO continues to be limited to only regional funding targets for all projects, thereby eliminating major infrastructure projects, severely limiting regional level projects and ultimately pitting the rural and suburban projects against urban ones.

The Partnership recognizes that there is simply not enough revenue to cover the many worthy projects in the queue, which is why we have consistently advocated for greater resources for MassDOT. Nevertheless, we would be remiss if we did not voice our concern over the inability of the CMMPO to access statewide funding sources in an effort to address as many projects as possible in the Central Massachusetts region.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments. If there are any questions regarding these projects or our commentary on the TIP, please contact Jessica Strunkin at 774.760.0495 x.101, or by email at Jessica@495partnership.org. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul F. Matthews
Executive Director



Jessica Strunkin
Deputy Director