



200 FRIBERG PARKWAY
WESTBOROUGH, MA 01581
774-760-0495
495PARTNERSHIP.ORG

June 2, 2017

Secretary & CEO Stephanie Pollack
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Massachusetts Department of Transportation's DRAFT FY18-22 Capital Investment Plan

Dear Secretary Pollack:

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, thank you for your continued leadership at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and for your commitment to transparency, project selection criteria, prudent investments, and improving the reliability of our entire transportation system. We also want to congratulate you on the new online format for the CIP, which is both easy to navigate and transparent, and will hopefully result in greater public engagement.

The issues of transportation reform and investment have been priorities of the 495/MetroWest Partnership since our founding as a non-profit regional advocacy organization over a decade ago. We are focused on alleviating economic constraints and limitations across thirty-five communities that have over half a million residents and over \$23 Billion in annual payroll, while conducting numerous initiatives on transportation, workforce housing, brownfields, and water resources.

In transportation, the Partnership oversaw the identification of regional priorities for transportation through our *Top Ten Transportation Nightmares* project in 2004 and 2014, driven by media coverage of transportation issues, public nominations of transportation problems, and an objective evaluation process of public and private sector experts. Using the resulting priorities list, the Partnership has advocated for needed road and bridge improvements, played a key role in founding the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority, secured federal funding to develop solutions to the I-495/Route 9 and I-495/I-90 interchanges, worked on rail issues for the Worcester/Framingham, Franklin, and Fitchburg Lines, regularly provided regional perspective on relevant capital investment plans, unified planning work plans, and transportation investment programs, convened a working group on the 495/9/90 area for MassDOT, and has regularly called for increases in state revenue and investment in transportation infrastructure and services. As such, we welcome any investments consistent with our *Top Ten Transportation Nightmares* list.

The Partnership recognizes the extensive work that went into transforming the CIP process for MassDOT and the MBTA. We offered commentary during the development of this draft CIP and conducted outreach to our municipal stakeholders, encouraging their participation in the process through online commentary. Our comments on this draft, will echo sentiments previously shared by the Partnership in pursuit of our regional transportation goals. We should also note our role on the Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) Stakeholder Group, for which

we have offered support and input on the scoring process. MassDOT has done a stellar job with the initial implementation of project selection and scoring. This is a monumental effort and we are happy to contribute our perspectives as the process continues. We also appreciate the inclusion of a summary of SFY 2017 accomplishments and feel it is important to publicize the ongoing work for the various divisions within MassDOT.

Speaking of ongoing work, the Partnership and our various stakeholders recognize the impressive implementation of All-Electronic Tolling (AET) and the corresponding demolition work on the legacy toll plazas. MassDOT should be commended for this smooth transition to AET and for minimizing the traffic impacts of tollbooth demolition. The Partnership also appreciates the continued investment in the Statewide Intelligent Transportation Systems.

The Partnership appreciates the continued time, attention and resources directed to the I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvement Project. We are extremely pleased with the generous increase in CIP funds directed toward the project from \$31.7 million in the previous five-year CIP to \$227,036,317 in SFY 2019-2022. We look forward to continuing our dialogue with MassDOT and key project stakeholders as the design process moves forward and we are happy to conduct outreach when appropriate, such as reconvening the 495/9/90 Working Group.

Additionally, we are very pleased to see that two of our previous recommendations have been included in the draft. These include the Reclamation on Route 122A (Main Street) in Grafton, from Providence Road to the Sutton town line (Project ID 607903), and the ramp improvements on Route 9 and Route 20 (project 607442) in Northborough and Shrewsbury.

In reviewing the draft CIP for FY 2018-2022, the Partnership supports the following areas of investment:

- Acton, Intersection & Signal Improvements on Sr2 & Sr 111 (Mass Ave) at Piper Road & Taylor Road (607748)
- Acton - Carlisle - Westford, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Extension (604532)
- Acton - Concord, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Construction (606223)
- Acton - Maynard, Assabet River Rail Trail Construction (604531)
- Ashland, Reconstruction on Route 126 from Framingham T.L. to the Holliston T.L. (604123)
- Boxborough, Bridge Replacement Route 111 over I-495 (608009)
- Commuter Rail - Franklin Line, Double Track and Signal (P0214)
- Framingham, Reconstruction of Union Ave, from Proctor St. to Main St. (608228)
- Framingham - Natick, Cochituate Rail Trail Construction including Pedestrian Bridge (607732)
- Franklin, Pedestrian Bridge Construction Old Sr 140 over MBTA/CSX (607273)
- Grafton, Reclamation on Route 122A (Main St.), from Providence Rd. to Sutton T.L.
- Hopedale - Milford, Resurfacing & Intersection Improvements on Route 16 (607428)
- Hopkinton, Signal & Intersection Improvements on Route 135 (606043)
- Hopkinton - Westborough, Bridge Replacement, Fruit St. over CSX & Sudbury River (606632)
- Hudson, Bridge Replacement State Route 85 over the Assabet River (604732)
- Littleton - Westford, Interstate Maintenance & Related Work on I-495 (608209)
- Marlborough, Reconstruction of Route 85 (604810)
- Marlborough, Improvement at Route 20 at Curtis Ave (608566)

- Marlborough - Northborough, Interstate Maintenance & Related Work on I-290 (607181)
- Marlborough - Sudbury, Stormwater Improvements along Route 20 (608217)
- Maynard, Bridge Replacement, carrying Florida Rd over the Assabet River (608637)
- Medway, Reconstruction on Route 109 (605657)
- Natick, Reconstruction of Route 27 from North Ave. to Wayland T.L. (605034)
- Natick, Natick Center Station Accessibility Project (P0174)
- Natick, West Natick Station Mini-High Ramps, Stairs (P0504)
- Northborough-Shrewsbury, Reconstruction on Route 9 & Route 20 Ramp Improvements (607442)
- Northborough - Shrewsbury - Westborough, Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 9 (607176)
- Plainville - Wrentham, Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 1 (608497)
- Shrewsbury, Resurfacing & Related work on Main St. from I-290 ramps easterly to Maple Ave. (602740)
- Southborough, Reconstruction of Main St. (Route 30), from Sears Rd to Park St (604989)
- Southborough, Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 9, from Framingham T.L. to White Bagley Rd
- Stow, Bridge Replacement Gleasondale Rd over the Assabet River (605342)
- Stow, Bridge Replacement Box Mill Rd over Elizabeth Brook (608255)
- Upton, Reconstruction of Hartford Ave North, High St & Hopkinton Rd (606125)
- Wayland, Signal & Intersection Improvements at Route 27 and Route 30 (601579)
- Westborough, Intersection & Signal Improvements at Route 9 & Lyman St (604864)
- Westford, Intersection & Signal Improvements at Route 110 & Tadmuck Rd (607251)
- Westford, Intersection Improvements at Groton Rd (Route 40) & Oak Hill Rd, Includes New Bridge W-26-027 (608036)
- Westford, Intersection Improvements at Groton Rd (Route 40) & Dunstable Rd (608037)

We are grateful for the inclusion of these projects, and other maintenance and bridge projects in our region. The Partnership also appreciates the commitment by MassDOT and the MBTA to Commuter Rail Improvements through investments in Positive Train Control and various reliability projects. We also recognize the importance of investing in the Framingham Secondary Line, as a strategic assets connecting two rail lines with potential for expanded service to the 495/MetroWest region in the form of Pilot Commuter Rail service to Foxborough. Continued support for the Regional Transit Authorities serving the 495/MetroWest region including the Greater Attleboro RTA, Lowell RTA, MetroWest RTA, Montachusett RTA, and the Worcester RTA is essential to our region's economic prosperity. We welcome the ongoing investments in our Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) including GATRA, MWRTA, MART, LRTA and WRTA. Going forward, we would like to see a funding mechanism to connect RTA services in a strategic manner, such as between the WRTA and MWRTA, opening greater access to jobs in our region by residents throughout Central Massachusetts. Additionally, continued funding for innovative Transportation Management Associations is also needed to address first/last mile challenges.

Despite the many investments in the 495/MetroWest region, several worthy projects remain stuck on the Universe of Projects list. We hope to see some of the many other projects that are important to our region added to the CIP, such as:

- Ramp construction and relocation, I-495 at Route 126 in Bellingham (Project ID 604862);
- Intersection improvements at Route 126/135/MBTA/CSX Railroad in Framingham (Project ID 606109);
- Reconstruction on Route 16 in Holliston (Project ID 605745 - consistent with our regional Top Ten Nightmares #9 Route 16 Corridor);
- Upgrades to the Route 85 and Route 62 Rotary in Hudson (Project ID BO-0069);
- Bridge Replacement Route 62 over the Assabet River in Maynard (Project ID 604564);
- Rehabilitation on Route 16, from Route 109 to Beaver St. in Milford (Project ID 608045 - consistent with our regional Top Ten Nightmares #9 Route 16 Corridor);
- Intersection improvements at Route 20 and Landham Rd in Sudbury (Project ID 607249);
- Construction of I-495/Route 1A Ramps in Wrentham (603739) - consistent with our regional Top Ten Nightmares #8 - Routes 1 and 1A at I-495); and
- Continued progress on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Wayside Trail, Upper Charles Rail Trail, and MA Central Rail Trail in various communities in 495/MetroWest in support of multi-modal options.

While we understand the financial constraints in this and every five-year CIP, we would be remiss if we did not mention two additional long-standing project needs in our region, namely **I-495/Route 9 Interchange** and **I-495/I-290**. We recognize that there are planned improvements around the I-495/Route 9 Interchange in the FY21-25 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Central Massachusetts MPO and therefore, funding for the project will hopefully be included in this year's CIP. However, despite its inclusion of funding in the Bond Bill and a score of 77 in the Project Universe matrix, in addition to well documented and ongoing safety concerns, there is no resolution in sight for the I-495/I-290 Interchange. We remain hopeful that MassDOT will prioritize needed improvements to this important interchange serving residents from our entire region and employment centers throughout the Commonwealth.

If there are any additional questions or concerns on these issues, or if we can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,



Paul F. Matthews
Executive Director



Jessica L. Strunkin
Deputy Director