



495/METROWEST

PARTNERSHIP

Leaders for Regional Prosperity

July 22, 2016

Mr. David Mohler, Chair
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization's draft Transportation Improvement Program, FFY 2017-2021

Dear Mr. Mohler:

On behalf of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, please accept the following as our official comments regarding the draft *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP) for FFY 2017 to FFY 2021.

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 \$22.5 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 continues to grow thanks to a diverse economic base and a high quality of life. While this growth has resulted in opportunities and benefits, 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.

We recognize that there are not enough financial resources to meet all the transportation demands of the Greater Boston region; the fiscal challenges related to the state's transportation infrastructure have been well documented and have become part of the public and legislative discourse. Additionally, the Partnership's diverse Board membership of public officials, private sector representation, and higher education leaders took a position relative to the need for transportation reform and financing in our paper: *Fairly Funding Transportation*. The Partnership's unified position, balanced amongst diverse public and private interests, recognizes the importance of adequately and equitably funding transportation needs in the 495/MetroWest region and throughout the Commonwealth. The draft TIP for FFY 2017-2021 is another clear indication of the condition of transportation financing in the Greater Boston region.

Nevertheless, we greatly appreciate the 495/MetroWest Projects included in the FFY 2017-2021 TIP, and as such would like to note our strong support for the following projects in our region:

(Newly added projects are emboldened)

- **Acton - Concord - Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Construction (Phase II-B) (Project #606223 - FFY 2018);**

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- Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements on SR2 & SR111 (Massachusetts Avenue) at Piper Road & Taylor Road (#607748 - FFY 2018);
- Ashland - Reconstruction on Route 126 (Pond Street), from the Framingham T.L. to the Holliston T.L. (Project #604123 - FFY 2020);
- Boxborough - Bridge Replacement, B-18-002, Route 111 over I-495 (Project #608009, FFY 2020 & 2021);
- Foxborough - Canton - Norwood - Walpole - Stormwater Improvement along Route 1, 1A, and I-95 (Project #608599 - FFY 2019);
- Foxborough - Walpole - Resurfacing and related work on Route 1 (Project #608480 - FFY 2020);
- Foxborough - Plainville - Wrentham - Franklin Interstate Maintenance and related work on I-495 (Project #608210 FFY 2021);
- Framingham - Natick - Cochituate Rail Trail Construction including pedestrian bridge, N-03-014, over Route 9 & Bridge over Route 30 (Project #607732 - FFY 2020);
- Framingham - Reconstruction of Union Avenue, from Proctor St. to Main St. (Project #608228 - FFY 2021);
- Hopkinton - Signal & Intersection Improvements on Route 135 (Project #606043 - FFY 2019);
- Hopkinton and Westborough - Bridge Replacement, H-23-006=W-24-016, Fruit Street over CSX & Sudbury River (Project #606632 - FFY 2018);
- Hopkinton - Westborough - Reconstruction of I-90/I-495 Interchange (Project #607977 - FFY 2020 & 2021);
- Marlborough - Reconstruction of Route 85 (Maple Street) (Project #604810 - FFY 2017);
- Marlborough - Sudbury - Stormwater Improvements Along Route 20 (Project #608217 FFY 2018);
- Marlborough - Resurfacing and related work on Route 20 (Project #608467 - FFY 2019);
- Maynard - Bridge Replacement, M-10-006, Florida Rd over Assabet River (Project #608637 FFY 2021)
- Milford - Hopedale - Resurfacing & Intersection Improvements on Route 16 (Main Street), from Water Street West to approximately 120 feet west of the Milford/Hopedale T.L. and the intersection of Route 140 (Project #607428 - FFY 2019);
- Natick - Reconstruction of Route 27 (North Main Street), from North Avenue to the Wayland T.L. (Project #605034 - FFY 2019);
- Southborough - Resurfacing & Related work on Route 9, from the Framingham T.L. to White Bagley Road (Project #607448 - FFY 2017);
- Southborough - Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30), from Sears Road to Park Street (Project #604989 - FFY 2018);
- Southborough - Resurfacing and related work on Route 30 (Project #608476 FFY 2021);
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-11, Box Mill Road over Elizabeth Brook (#BR1901 - FFY 2019); and
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-001, (ST 62) Gleasondale Rd over the Assabet River (Project #605342 FFY2020).

Given our years of advocacy on behalf of the project, we would be remiss if we did not recognize the addition of the I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvements to the Boston MPO's TIP. We greatly appreciate its inclusion and look forward to the positive impacts this project will have on not only the 495/MetroWest region but on the many drivers from around the Commonwealth who utilize this interchange on a daily basis. We are also pleased by the inclusion of a variety of new projects that traverse several sub-regions, as highlighted above.

Additionally, we would note the inclusion of several projects identified in our 2014 *495/MetroWest Top Ten Transportation Nightmares*, namely Route 9 improvements, Route 16 in Milford, as well as Suburban Mobility Challenges with consistent funding to the MetroWest RTA. The #3 Nightmare in 495/MetroWest was identified as "Suburban Mobility Challenges: First Mile, Last Mile & a Few in Between", which speaks to the continued need for expanded transit services in our region. The funding for various MetroWest RTA projects is essential

to the growth of transit options in our region. The MetroWest RTA has proven a good steward of any and all state and federal resources, continually expanding services as well as bringing innovation to the system. The availability of transit in our suburban communities has increasingly become an economic development issue, with employers wanting to attract workers who require last mile service from the Commuter Rail stations to job centers in our region. We feel the MetroWest RTA, along with various TMA partners in the region, is best positioned to meet the first/last mile needs in our region. The Partnership strongly supports all of the resources made available to the MetroWest RTA in this TIP.

We appreciate the ongoing reforms at MassDOT and the MBTA under the leadership of Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and Secretary of Transportation Pollack, but also recognize the inadequate and uncertain level of funding for transportation projects. The lack of sound financial footing for transportation infrastructure going forward continues to jeopardize the state’s and the region’s economic recovery and future success. Due to these financial straits, major projects that would have significant regional impact sit idle in the TIP’s Universe of Projects list. Nevertheless, the list continues to grow as the resources to address those needs remain elusive.

Below is a listing of projects within the Partnership’s service area, with *Nightmares* projects emboldened, for which we would like to reiterate our support; as a point of background, the Nightmares list was generated through a public nomination process coordinated by the Partnership with *MetroWest Daily News*. Following a series of articles and a three month nomination process, members of a Partnership sub-committee of transportation professionals, conducted a thorough review of the nominations to determine regional priorities for transportation planning and infrastructure investment.

<i>ID</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Name</i>
1656	Acton	Intersection improvements at Massachusetts Ave (Route 111) and Main St (Route 27) (Kelly’s Corner)
940	Bellingham	South Main Street (Route 126) from Mechanic St. (Route 140) to Douglas Dr.
1718	Bellingham	South Main Street (Route 126), from Old Elm Street to Meadow Road
608006	Framingham	Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Installation at Route 9 and Maynard Road
602038	Framingham	Edgell Road Corridor Project
606109	Framingham	Intersection Improvements at Route 126/135/MBTA & CSX Railroad
356	Framingham	Route 126 (Hollis Street), from Irving St to Ashland T.L.
955	Framingham	Route 126 (Route 9 to Lincoln St.)
601359	Franklin	Reconstruction of Pleasant Street, from Main St to Chestnut St
607774	Franklin	Resurfacing & Intersection Improvements on Route 140, from Beaver St to I-495 ramps

602462	Holliston	Signal Installation at Route 16/126 and Oak St.
603345	Hudson & Marlborough	Reconstruction on Routes I-290 & 495 and Bridge Replacement
1617	Hudson	Route 85/Route 62 Rotary Improvements
601906	Hudson	Bridge Replacement, Cox Street over Assabet River
1488	Hudson	Lincoln St. at Cox St. and Packard St.
1047	Hudson	South Street
1139	Hudson & Stow	Assabet River Rail Trail (through Stow)
1460	Littleton	Harvard Street
604231	Marlborough	Intersection & Signal Improvements on Route 20 at Concord Road
604811	Marlborough	Reconstruction of Route 20 (East Main Street) from Main Street Easterly to Lincoln Street
604735	Medfield	Reconstruction of North St., from Fairy St. to Pine St.
1167	Medway	Route 109 (Milford Street)
602134	Medway	Resurfacing & Related Work on a Section of Medway Village Street
608045	Milford	Rehabilitation on Route 16 from Route 109 to Beaver St.
967	Milford	Veteran's Memorial Drive/Alternate Route
602364	Millis	Reconstruction of Village St, from Main St (Rte 109) to the Medway Town Line
605313	Natick	Bridge Replacement, Route 27 (North Main St.) over Route 9 (Worcester St.) and Interchange Improvements
607732	Natick	Conchituate Rail Trail, Phase Two
1064	Southborough	Cordavile Road/Route 85 Rehabilitation
607701	Southborough & Westborough	I-495/Route 9 Interchange Improvements
1139	Stow & Hudson	Assabet River Rail Trail

1069	Sudbury	Route 20/Wayside Inn Road
607249	Sudbury	Route 20/Landham Road Intersection
1037	Sudbury	Route 20/Horsepond Road
1164	Sudbury	Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2D
1305	Sudbury	Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Phase 2E
603739	Wrentham	Construction of Route 1-495/Route 1A Ramps
604745	Wrentham	Reconstruction of Taunton Street (Route 152)

We recognize and appreciate the advancement of the Route 126/135/MBTA & CSX project in Framingham to the Boston MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan in FFY 2026-2030, as well as the Natick Bridge Replacement on Route 27 over Route 9 (LRTP 2021-2025).

The Partnership is well aware that transportation needs in the 495/MetroWest region far outweigh the financial resources for any given fiscal year in the entire Boston Region MPO's TIP. However, we encourage you and the other members of the Boston MPO to recognize the economic impact of delaying projects in our region. Projects like Improvements at I-495 & Route 9 must be addressed sooner rather than later to successfully confront congestion, safety, air quality, and sustainable development issues in the 495/MetroWest region.

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 L. Strunkin
Deputy Director