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May 12, 2017

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 2018-2022

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 2018 to FFY 2022.

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 \$23 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 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 2018-2022 is another clear indication of the condition of transportation financing in the Greater Boston region.

Despite a growing list of needs in the Universe of Projects, we greatly appreciate the 495/MetroWest Projects included in the FFY 2018-2022 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 2019);
- Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements on SR2 & SR111 (Massachusetts Avenue) at Piper Road & Taylor Road (#607748 - FFY 2019);
- **Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements at Kelley's Corner, Route 111 (Massachusetts Avenue) and Route 27 (Main Street) (Project #608229 - FFY 2022);**
- 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 2022);
- Framingham - Natick - Cochituate Rail Trail Construction including pedestrian bridge, N-03-014, over Route 9 & Bridge over Route 30 (Project #607732 - FFY 2018);
- 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 - 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 - Resurfacing and related work on Route 20 (Project #608467 - FFY 2019);
- **Marlborough - Improvement at Route 20 (East Main St.) at Curtis Avenue (Project #608566 FFY 2021);**
- 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 - Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30), from Sears Road to Park Street (Project #604989 - FFY 2018);
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-11, Box Mill Road over Elizabeth Brook (#608255 - FFY 2019);
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-001, (ST 62) Gleasondale Rd over the Assabet River (Project #605342 FFY2020); and
- **Sudbury - Bike Path Construction (Bruce Freeman Rain Trail) (Project #608164 FFY 2022).**

Given our years of advocacy on behalf of the project, again this year we would like to recognize the inclusion of the I-90/I-495 Interchange Improvements to the Boston MPO's TIP. We continue to 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 projects identified in our 2014 *495/MetroWest Top Ten Transportation Nightmares*, namely I-90/I-495, 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 Commonwealth’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, which 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 offer 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.

<u>ID</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Name</u>
604862	Bellingham	Ramp Construction and Relocation, I-495 at Route 126
604453	Bellingham	Improvements at 2 Locations: Mechanic St/Mendon St. (Route 140) and North Main St/South Main St (Route 126)
608006	Framingham	Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Installation at Route 9 and Maynard Rd.
602038	Framingham	Edgell Road Corridor Project
603865	Framingham	Signal and Intersection Improvements at Route 9 and Temple St.
606109	Framingham	Intersection Improvements at Route 126/135/MBTA and CSX Railroad
601359	Franklin	Reconstruction of Pleasant St, from Main St. to Chestnut St.
602929	Holliston	Multi-Use Trail Construction on a Section of the Upper Charles Rail
605745	Holliston	Reconstruction on Route 16, from Quail Run to the Sherborn T.L.

602155	Holliston	Reconstruction of Norfolk St., from Sabina Dr. to Holly Lane
602462	Holliston	Signal Installation at Route 16/126 and Oak St.
601906	Hudson	Bridge Replacement, Cox St. over the Assabet River
603345	Hudson, Marlborough	Reconstruction on Routes I-290 and I-495 and Bridge Replacement
608443	Littleton, Ayer	Intersection Improvements on Route 2A at Willow Rd. and Bruce St.
604811	Marlborough	Reconstruction of Route 20 from Main St. Easterly to Lincoln St.
604697	Marlborough	Reconstruction of Farm Rd., from Cook Lane to Route 20
604735	Medfield	Reconstruction of North St., from Frairy St. to Pine St.
608045	Milford	Rehabilitation on Route 16, from Route 109 to Beaver St.
602364	Millis	Reconstruction of Village St., from Main St. to the Medway T.L.
605313	Natick	Bridge Replacement Route 27 over Route 9 & Interchange Improvements
607701	Southborough, Westborough	Improvements at I-495 and Route 9
607249	Sudbury	Intersection Improvements at Route 20 and Landham Rd.
603739	Wrentham	Construction of I-495/Route 1A Ramps
604745	Wrentham	Reconstruction of Taunton St. (Route 152)

The Partnership welcomes the transparency offered in Table H-1, outlining the TIP Target Programming by Municipality, and based on that table, we would note that several of the communities with projects lingering on the Universe of Projects list have not received any TIP funding as far back as 2008, and possibly further back. Communities in the 495/MetroWest region which fit into this category include, but may not be limited to: Bellingham, Holliston, Medfield, Millis, and Wrentham. Several other of our communities have received no TIP funding from 2008-2022, and do not even have projects ready for consideration. This speaks to the ongoing challenge for municipalities to fund project designs, only to have the designs be outdated by the time consideration for the TIP is feasible. The Partnership will continue to advocate to policymakers about flipping this paradigm, recommending consideration of state design funding in exchange for partial municipal funding for projects.

Beyond project on the Universe list with no clear path to construction, we do, however, 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 and Reconstruction of I-290/I-495 Interchange 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