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May 18, 2018

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 2019-2023

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 2019 to FFY 2023.

The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a non-profit advocacy organization serving thirty-five communities, over 600,000 residents, and an employment base of over \$24 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. Four years later, our 2014 *495/MetroWest Top Ten Transportation Nightmares*, a publicly nominated list, still 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 2019-2023 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 Unprogrammed Projects, we greatly appreciate the 495/MetroWest projects included in the FFY 2019-2023 TIP, and as such, would like to note our strong support for the following projects in our region:

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF: ACTON | ASHLAND | BELLINGHAM | BERLIN | BOLTON | BOXBOROUGH | FOXBOROUGH | FRAMINGHAM | FRANKLIN | GRAFTON
HARVARD | HOLLISTON | HOPEDALE | HOPKINTON | HUDSON | LITTLETON | MARLBOROUGH | MAYNARD | MEDFIELD | MEDWAY | MILFORD | MILLIS | NATICK
NORFOLK | NORTHBOROUGH | SHERBORN | SHREWSBURY | SOUTHBOROUGH | STOW | SUDBURY | UPTON | WAYLAND | WESTBOROUGH | WESTFORD | WRENTHAM

(Newly added projects are emboldened)

FFY 2019

- Acton - Concord - Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Construction (Phase II-B) (Project #606223)
- Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements on SR2 & SR111 (Massachusetts Avenue) at Piper Road & Taylor Road (#607748)
- Marlborough - Resurfacing and related work on Route 20 (Project #608467)
- 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)
- Natick - Reconstruction of Route 27 (North Main Street), from North Avenue to the Wayland T.L. (Project #605034)
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-11, Box Mill Road over Elizabeth Brook (#608255)
- Sudbury - Intersection Improvements at Route 20 & Landham Rd (#607249)

FFY 2020

- Ashland - Reconstruction on Route 126 (Pond Street), from the Framingham T.L. to the Holliston T.L. (Project #604123)
- Hopkinton - Signal & Intersection Improvements on Route 135 (Project #606043)
- Foxborough - Walpole - Resurfacing and related work on Route 1 (Project #608480)
- Stow - Bridge Replacement, S-29-001, (ST 62) Gleasondale Rd over the Assabet River (Project #605342)

FFY 2021

- Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements on SR2 & SR111 (Massachusetts Ave) at Piper Rd & Taylor Rd (#607748)
- Framingham - Reconstruction of Union Avenue, from Proctor St. to Main St. (Project #608228)
- Maynard - Bridge Replacement, M-10-006, Florida Rd over Assabet River (Project #608637)

FFY 2022

- Acton - Intersection & Signal Improvements at Kelley's Corner, Route 111 (Massachusetts Avenue) and Route 27 (Main Street) (Project #608229)
- Foxborough - Plainville - Wrentham - Franklin - Interstate Maintenance and related work on I-495 (Project #608210)
- Foxborough - Canton - Norwood - Walpole - Stormwater Improvement along Route 1, 1A, and I-95 (Project #608599)
- Hopkinton - Westborough - Reconstruction of I-90/I-495 Interchange (Project #607977)
- Sudbury - Bike Path Construction (Bruce Freeman Rail Trail) (Project #608164)

FFY 2023

- Bellingham - Rehabilitation & Related Work on Route 126, From Douglas Dr. to Route 140 (#608887)
- Hopkinton - Westborough - Reconstruction of I-90/I-495 Interchange (Project #607977)
- Littleton - Ayer - Intersection Improvements on Route 2A at Willow Rd. and Bruce St. (#608443)
- Marlborough - Improvements at Route 20 (East Main St) at Curtis Ave. (#608566)
- Wrentham - Construction of a Slip Ramp from Route 1A NB to I-495 SB and Associated Intersection Improvements along Route 1A (#603739)

We are perplexed that the Foxborough Bridge Replacement, B-18-002, Route 111 over I-495 Project #608009, does not appear to be listed in FFY 2020 & 2021 (as it was in last year's TIP), despite the fact

that it is referenced as being currently programmed (see p. 183 in Table C-1). Additionally, the Partnership supports the request by Adam Duchesneau, Boxborough’s Town Planner, to include new sidewalks on the bridge project.

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.

We also greatly appreciate the addition of 495/MetroWest regional projects in Bellingham, Littleton, Sudbury, and Wrentham, some of which have been lingering on the Universe of Unprogrammed Projects, to the FFY 2019-2023 TIP.

Additionally, we would note the inclusion of projects identified in our 2014 *495/MetroWest Top Ten Transportation Nightmares*, namely the slip ramps and associated intersection improvements at I-495 and Route 1A in Wrentham (#8 on our list). The Partnership also strongly supports the MPO’s 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 continued economic success. Due to these financial straits, major projects that would have significant regional impact sit idle in the TIP’s Universe of Unprogrammed 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 and new projects italicized, 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>
608436	<i>Ashland</i>	Rehabilitation & rail crossing improvements on Cherry St.
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)

N/A	Bellingham	South Main St. (Route 126) - Elm St to Douglas Dr Reconstruction
608006	Framingham	Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Installation at Route 9 and Maynard Rd.
608889	Framingham	Traffic signal installation at Edgell Rd at Central St.
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 (Noted inclusion in LRTP 2026-30)
601359	Franklin	Reconstruction of Pleasant St, from Main St. to Chestnut St.
605745	Holliston	Reconstruction on Route 16, from Quail Run to the Sherborn T.L.
602154	Holliston	Resurfacing and related work on Route 126 (Concord St.)
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
604231	Marlborough	Intersection & signal improvements on Route 20 at Concord Rd
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 (Noted inclusion in LRTP 2021-25)
607701	Southborough, Westborough	Improvements at I-495 and Route 9
604745	Wrentham	Reconstruction of Taunton St. (Route 152)

The Partnership welcomes the transparency offered in Appendix E, outlining the TIP Target Funding by Subregion and by Municipality, and based on that table, we would note that several of the communities with projects lingering on the Universe of Unprogrammed Projects list are still not scheduled to receive any funding and based on the FFY18-22 TIP's Table H-1 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: Holliston, Medfield, and Millis. 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.

Understanding that the Inner Core represents a large portion of population and employment in the Boston MPO region, it is important to recognize that the Inner Core also has greater resources and staffing, as well as greater access to transit options than subregions like SWAP, which will see only 1% of regional target funding from 2018-2022. Not to mention the fact that 495/MetroWest residents are the skilled and highly educated workforce filling many jobs in the Inner Core and using the highway and transit systems in the 495/MetroWest Region to get to the Inner Core. With this in mind, the Partnership feels strongly that the MAGIC, MetroWest, SWAP, and TRIC subregions require more than 26% of target funding given that they represent 42% of federal-aid roadway miles (Figure E-1).

Beyond projects 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