



200 FRIBERG PARKWAY, WESTBOROUGH, MA 01581
PHONE: (774) 760-0495 FAX: (774) 760-0017
WWW.495PARTNERSHIP.ORG

ISSUE BRIEF

New MassDOT Workforce Transit Grant Program

June 11, 2019

In the [Capital Investment Plan \(CIP\) for FY2020-2024](#)¹, MassDOT included \$9.9 Million to establish a new workforce transit grant program, with \$1.5 Million proposed for the first year in FY2020, noting that:

Starting in October 2019 (FFY20) MassDOT plans to redirect some \$1,580,000 in Federal funds, plus a state match, from general commuter education to specific workforce services. The federal funds will come from MassDOT's statewide allocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, so a fundamental goal of the program will be air quality improvements linked to a reduction in congestion and single occupancy vehicle usage. The particular focus will be workforce transportation- i.e., how to get more workers to their jobs with less air pollution.

The new program will provide grants to provide new and financially sustainable transportation options for MA workers. Examples of possible projects could be: first mile-last mile links between one or more employment sites and a commuter rail station or other transit center; a subscription service to an office park or manufacturing facility; lift equipped van services to a vocational rehabilitation center. Grants will be competitive. Applicants are expected to include employers, Transportation Management Associates, municipalities and Regional Transit Authorities. Partnerships will be encouraged."

The 495/MetroWest Partnership worked with the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority to convene a May 10th regional forum on this program with MassDOT's Rail and Transit Administrator Astrid Glynn. At this event, covered by the [Milford Daily News](#)² and in subsequent coverage by the [MetroWest Daily News](#)³, regional leaders from the private and public sectors provided input and feedback on the program and regional workforce transit needs. In particular, input was welcomed on potential scoring criteria for the applications, since it was noted that the application review would include...

- How does the project define "success"?
- How will the project improve travel options for workers?
- How many workers are expected to benefit?
- How cost effective will the service be?
- Will the service be financially sustainable after the grant ends?

¹<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/capital-investment-plan-cip>

² <https://www.milforddailynews.com/news/20190511/massdot-pitches-new-transit-grant-program> .

³ <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/20190606/workforce-transit-grant-program-will-award-money-for-new-transit-projects-targeting-commuters>

- Will the service increase transit equity in the region and the Commonwealth?
- How will the service improve air quality and/or reduce congestion?

Beyond the forum the Partnership convened with the MWRTA, MassDOT has worked with the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association and others to hold such public forums elsewhere in the state. Recognizing the opportunity to get broad input on this program, MassDOT has created a brief online survey at https://mbta.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_51J9ZTLlxodbvfvf to hear the perspectives of potential applicants, hear about the challenges that in getting workers to job sites, and provide a space for public feedback regarding the proposed program.

In addition to this online survey, written comments on the program can be submitted to MassDOT's Manager of Transit Grant Programs Alex Cox at alex.cox@dot.state.ma.us.

After the comment period, MassDOT is planning to issue a Request for Proposals that will include finalized Guidelines and an application. The expectation is to accept applications during the summer and announce awards in the fall, while offering training on the technical requirements of the CMAQ program and information on what is expected of a Federal grantee.

If you have feedback on this program, please let us know by emailing paul@495partnership.org since the Partnership would appreciate being kept informed of any regional concerns and perspectives.