



Transportation for Massachusetts
14 Beacon Street, Suite 707
Boston, MA 02108
(413) 367-T4MA
www.t4ma.org
@T4MASS

TRANSPORTATION FOR MASSACHUSETTS STATEMENT ON FY 2016 BUDGET

The Governor's proposed budget provides modest increases for transportation funding over last year's appropriations, but proposes \$15 million less for the MBTA than the 2013 Finance Act anticipated for FY16 and \$30 million less in snow removal funding than the average annual amount expended over the past 5 years. A substantial commitment of state resources is necessary to protect our transportation system and the jobs that depend on reliable and safe mobility.

Boston, March 5, 2015 - Adequate revenue is necessary to maintain and operate a reliable, future-ready statewide transportation network to bolster our economy and serve our families. Our transportation network, including roads, bridges, regional transit, the MBTA, and walking and biking facilities, has been chronically underfunded. The MBTA faces \$6.7 billion in needed repairs, almost \$4 billion is needed to fix bridges across the state, and regional bus systems provide infrequent and limited service due to lack of funding. On Wednesday, Transportation for Massachusetts submitted a call to rebuild and fund our transportation system, signed by over 12,000 residents.

In his first months in office, Governor Baker made important strides towards solving our transportation challenges. He asserted responsibility for the MBTA's system breakdowns and established a Special Panel with a short turn-around and high standards to review the MBTA's finances, governance and operations.

We appreciate the difficult fiscal reality in which this budget was developed. This is a challenging budget for transportation, and, as proposed, will not facilitate the significant progress we need to improve transportation for residents across the state. We look forward to working with the legislature and administration in the coming months to help them meet the urgent need for improvements in transportation across the Commonwealth.

As the winter storms have shown, we have a fragile transportation system on which millions of people's livelihoods depend. Ongoing efforts to reform and streamline operations are essential, but they are a complement and not a substitute to financial commitment. Other regions of the US and the world are making these investments and Massachusetts must be prepared to compete in the 21st century.

In our initial review of the transportation implications of the Governor's budget, we note the following:

1. The Governor's FY 2016 budget appropriates \$187 million directly for the MBTA, \$15 million less than the \$202 million set out in the Transportation Finance Act of 2013; while this represents an increase over FY 2015, it is less than was promised less than two years ago.
2. The snow and ice removal funding is increased to \$70 million. While this is a more realistic number than in previous budgets, it is still \$30 million less than the actual \$100 million five-year average cost of snow and ice removal
3. The 2013 Transportation Finance Act set aside \$80 million for the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) in FY 2016 so they could provide improved levels of service. Because the Governor's FY 2016 budget explicitly lists only \$40 million for the RTAs, the RTAs should receive an additional \$40 million through the MassDOT budget.
4. The budget proposes to allow MassDOT to move funds between MassDOT, MBTA, and RTAs. It is a good idea to permit MassDOT to move a portion of its funds to the MBTA or the RTAs. Transit authorities, however, need fiscal certainty to be able to plan. MassDOT should therefore not be able to remove funds promised at the beginning of the year. Transportation for Massachusetts recommends a revision that would only allow one-way transfers from MassDOT to the transit agencies.
5. The budget for RTAs is contingent on the RTAs making progress on comprehensive service planning, which was an unfunded mandate in the 2013 Act. If RTAs are unable to meet the terms of MassDOT, this provision could become a punitive measure, reducing RTA budgets to FY13 levels.
6. The proposed budget allows MassDOT to seek additional revenue from advertising. It is important that MassDOT be encouraged to diversify and expand opportunities to increase revenue. The recent experience of MassDOT and the MBTA, along with best practices from other transportation agencies, should be instructive in setting realistic expectations for additional revenue from this source.

We look forward to discussing the budget with the Administration and the legislature with the goal of agreeing on prudent investments in our transportation services and infrastructure to support a robust, 21st century economy.

Transportation for Massachusetts is a statewide coalition of 47 member organizations supporting investment and innovation in mobility across the commonwealth. We support policies and programs that contribute to economic growth, public health, sustainability and access to opportunity.

###