



## **State invests in Cape transportation**

By Thomas Cahir  
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Cape residents focused on our transportation needs should know that we have strong partners in Gov. Deval Patrick and Transportation Secretary Richard Davey. They have listened to our ideas and concerns and invested in our transportation system within the limits of available funds. Examples of that commitment can be seen across our area, from Route 6 and Route 28 improvements to the new Barnstable Airport terminal funded by the state Department of Transportation.

And contrary to my longtime friend and former colleague Eric Turkington's characterizations ("Patrick's plan missed Cape's needs," My View, Jan. 25), the state has now proposed what would be significant and long-lasting additional Cape investments as part of its exceptional "Way Forward: a 21st Century Plan."

The administration worked with us to finalize a plan to restore seasonal passenger rail on weekends between Boston and Hyannis. The CapeFLYER will begin service on Memorial Day weekend, and the governor's transportation plan proposes additional future investments to upgrade the rail line and ensure the weekend train service becomes a permanent fixture.

Any Cape resident using the regional transit bus service — and anyone hoping to see our buses run on weekends and evenings — will cheer the governor's proposed increase in funding of \$5.9 million for our bus system. It will allow us to add service hours and invest in new customer-friendly technology that makes the daily bus ride more convenient. The plan includes resources to replace older buses in our fleet, which improves reliability with new modern environmentally friendly vehicles.

"The Way Forward" plan also targets further state road improvements on Route 6 in Bourne and Route 6A in Brewster, and it's important to point out that these are projects that are currently unfunded and could be delayed without approval of the governor's transportation plan.

In addition, the governor's plan would increase Chapter 90 funds to municipalities for local road and bridge upkeep to the highest level ever, with an additional \$100 million annually statewide. I know from my years in the Legislature that municipalities will welcome this news and put these resources to good use.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has also been a leader in helping us organize our Canal Area Regional Traffic Task Force to address the issues of congestion and construction

work on the bridges maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. MassDOT and the Corps have worked with us on construction schedules to minimize peak weekend traffic impacts. New live MassDOT traffic cameras are now online to provide information about current traffic conditions. MassDOT also is planning to install variable message boards and cameras on Routes 6, 25 and 28 to display real travel times. All parties on the task force are aware that additional future steps must be considered to address traffic on and off the bridges.

Overall, the governor's ambitious plan to build a transportation system for the future was carefully designed to meet the needs not only of the Cape but the South Shore and all regions of our state. MassDOT and the governor responded to the issues expressed in public meetings.

Cape residents will see the difference in the years ahead through better roads and bridges and a more comprehensive transit system. Our regional economy and workforce will benefit from these investments, and I thank the governor and Davey for advocating forcefully on our behalf.

Thomas Cahir is administrator of the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority.