



Web: [t4ma.org](http://t4ma.org) Twitter: [@T4MASS](https://twitter.com/T4MASS) Phone: 617.223.1655 Email: [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org)

Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oversight Hearing  
March 12, 2013

Chairman Straus, Chairman McGee and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to speak to you today and thank you for your leadership.

My name is Kristina Egan and I am the Director of Transportation for Massachusetts, a statewide transportation coalition dedicated to supporting transportation investments that create safe, affordable transportation choices for everyone in Massachusetts.

The coalition is composed of more than 30 organizations from across the state. We all have different reasons why we care about improving our transportation system. We have business groups such as MASCO and the Alliance for Business Leadership, who see that our future prosperity is linked to the strength of our transportation network. We have community-based organizations such as Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Neighbor to Neighbor and community development corporations, who understand that the bus stop is often the gateway to the American Dream. We have regional groups that know the importance of linking all our hubs together, such as the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District. We have public health groups such as the Massachusetts Public Health Association, that understand that getting people to integrate walking and biking into their daily routines helps fight chronic disease and saves health care costs. We have environmental groups such as the Environmental League of Massachusetts and the Conservation Law Foundation, that understand that the transportation sector is the fastest growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and unless we provide viable, convenient, and affordable transportation choices, we will never reach our state greenhouse gas reduction targets under the Global Warming Solutions Act. Other members of the coalition that you heard testify today include the Mass. Association of Regional Transit Authorities (MARTA), the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPC), and the MBTA Advisory Board.

Collectively, we represent 100,000 Massachusetts residents. I know you have been hearing from some of them.

**Coalition Members:** Alliance for Business Leadership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Groundwork Lawrence • Fairmount Indigo Line Collaborative • Institute for Human Centered Design • LISC • Livable Streets Alliance • Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations • Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • MassCommute • Massachusetts Public Health Association • Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance • MassBike • MASSPIRG • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) • Merrimack Valley Planning Commission • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Neighbor to Neighbor • Northeastern University/Dukakis Center • Old Colony Planning Council • On the Move • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • Somerville Community Corporation • Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership • Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • WalkBoston



Web: [t4ma.org](http://t4ma.org) Twitter: [@T4MASS](https://twitter.com/T4MASS) Phone: 617.223.1655 Email: [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org)

## Reform is Not Enough

You have heard from previous witnesses about reforms that are necessary as we continue to create best practices at MassDOT, making the Department more efficient, transparent and accountable to the taxpaying public. We are grateful for MassDOT's record of reform in recent years, and the bold decisions you made in 2009 to make our transportation department leaner and more streamlined.

Transportation for Massachusetts takes the position that reform is an ongoing process -- that we must always work to achieve the best possible transportation agency for our Commonwealth. We need transparent, easy-to-understand and easy-to-obtain performance measures so we can ensure that our public dollars are being spent wisely. But reform alone will not solve our transportation financing problems. We simply cannot shake the couch cushions for enough loose change to address our enormous funding needs.

## Transportation Funding Needs

Our priorities for transportation investment are to financially stabilize our transportation system, maintain our roads, bridges and public transportation infrastructure, and make strategic investments in transportation that will secure the Commonwealth's economic future. I will highlight a few priorities.

### *Regional Transit Authorities*

A recent report by MassINC, *Reinventing Transit*, demonstrates that better bus service in our regions will boost economic development. But RTA service has fallen substantially in recent years. Between 2002 and 2010, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority cut service by nearly 20%, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority eliminated nearly one quarter of its service, and the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority halved its fixed route operations.

Those are the numbers, but we need to remember that these cuts are affecting real people. In Springfield, Neighbor to Neighbor member, Ana Sanoguel is a 65-year old grandmother who recently had to wait an hour in the cold for a bus. Her son left the state because he couldn't find a job he could get to with reliable transit service.

We need to forward fund the RTAs, invest in service planning so we will know what will be needed in the near future, and provide enough funding so that the RTAs can offer weekend and evening hours.

**Coalition Members:** Alliance for Business Leadership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Groundwork Lawrence • Fairmount Indigo Line Collaborative • Institute for Human Centered Design • LISC • Livable Streets Alliance • Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations • Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • MassCommute • Massachusetts Public Health Association • Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance • MassBike • MASSPIRG • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) • Merrimack Valley Planning Commission • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Neighbor to Neighbor • Northeastern University/Dukakis Center • Old Colony Planning Council • On the Move • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • Somerville Community Corporation • Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership • Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • WalkBoston



Web: [t4ma.org](http://t4ma.org) Twitter: [@T4MASS](https://twitter.com/T4MASS) Phone: 617.223.1655 Email: [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org)

## *MBTA*

MBTA customers just saw an average increase in fares of 23% and those that depend on the Ride saw their costs double. While ridership on the MBTA and commuter trains has remained stable, we know the fare increase has meant that some people have not been able to afford to get where they need to go. And, we know that use of the Ride has decreased, keeping some of our most vulnerable and isolated residents housebound.

While some have been surprised that the fare increase didn't result in a significant loss in riders, what we can't know is how many more riders we might have seen if fares had not increased. What we do know is that MBTA ridership is projected to increase over the coming decades and the MBTA needs additional resources to be able to accommodate these new customers.

Drastic service cuts and fare increases are on the table again. Deficits are projected to grow in coming years. This is an annual and very painful discussion for our members.

## *Sidewalks, Paths, Bikeways*

Ensuring that we include funding for sidewalks, paths and bikeways is a priority for Transportation for Massachusetts. Included in the administration's plan are the Bay State Greenway Priority 100 that include shared use path projects that will increase the existing system of paths and bikeways by 100 miles around the state. These investments will connect town centers, extend existing paths, and create more of a network of paths. Projects from around the state are included such as the Mohawk Trail in the Berkshires, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Extension connecting Acton, Carlisle, Concord and Westford, the Mattapoisett Rail Trail Phase 2, the Marion-Wareham Rail Trail and the Border to Boston Trail in the Merrimack Valley. These projects, and others like the Blackstone Bikeway, make biking safer, and more attractive and give residents a choice for how to get around. In addition, we know there are health benefits when people take advantage of active transportation options.

## Consequences of Inaction or Too-Little Action

We are grateful for the growing and widespread agreement that the Commonwealth needs to address the transportation funding crisis. However, we are concerned that the revenue package may not be sufficient to get us where we need to go. We urge the legislature to develop a package that is large enough to address the myriad problems we face and opportunities we have.

- Failing to invest in transportation is failing to reach our economic potential

**Coalition Members:** Alliance for Business Leadership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Groundwork Lawrence • Fairmount Indigo Line Collaborative • Institute for Human Centered Design • LISC • Livable Streets Alliance • Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations • Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • MassCommute • Massachusetts Public Health Association • Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance • MassBike • MASSPIRG • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) • Merrimack Valley Planning Commission • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Neighbor to Neighbor • Northeastern University/Dukakis Center • Old Colony Planning Council • On the Move • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • Somerville Community Corporation • Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership • Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • WalkBoston



Web: [t4ma.org](http://t4ma.org) Twitter: [@T4MASS](https://twitter.com/T4MASS) Phone: 617.223.1655 Email: [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org)

- Failing to invest in transportation is failing to create jobs
- Failing to invest in transportation means leaving people stranded without a way to get to school, jobs, medical appointments
- Failing to invest in transportation means stagnating and losing competitiveness.

While Massachusetts ranks first in access to capital and third in education, according to CNBC, we rank 45th in transportation infrastructure. We cannot afford to sit idly by while young people leave the state to pursue jobs in places with vibrant urban centers where they don't need a car to get around.

### Position on Revenues

We support sufficient, stable transportation revenue sources that are dedicated to transportation and invested wisely. We support all revenue options that raise enough dollars and are fair -- both geographically so all regions pay and all regions benefit and also fair in terms of not disproportionately burdening low-income residents. We believe a portfolio of revenue streams would be best as relying on just one revenue stream can be dangerous as we have seen with the sales tax.

We know that an average of \$1 billion a year is needed -- this is the same figure that was put forward by the Transportation Finance Commission in 2007 and it is reinforced by MassDOT's recent assessment. Our goal should be not just to stabilize our finances and make the most needed repairs, but also to move us from a 20th century system to a 21st century system in every corner of the Commonwealth. If we only do the bare minimum of addressing the T and MassDOT funding gaps, those parts of the state that currently are underserved will continue to be underserved.

The MassDOT plan has been called ambitious. We do not see it so. Ninety-one percent of the amount called for in MassDOT's plan would go to fix what we already have, filling the hole that we have ignored. Truly ambitious plans include the interstate highway system or the Boston Transportation Plan. That is not what we are talking about here--the plan calls for only a handful of long overdue system enhancements.

### Final Requests of the Committee

We understand that this is a difficult conversation and that asking your constituents to pay more for our transportation is hard. But the cost of inaction or insufficiency is too great. I urge you to think about the kind of Commonwealth we all envision. We simply can't afford not to invest enough new revenue into our transportation system. We can't afford to continue the fiscally irresponsible practices we have used to paper over the shortfalls and borrow without knowing how we would pay the bill down the line. We can't afford not to fix the MBTA and our crumbling roads and bridges. And, we can't afford not to invest

**Coalition Members:** Alliance for Business Leadership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Groundwork Lawrence • Fairmount Indigo Line Collaborative • Institute for Human Centered Design • LISC • Livable Streets Alliance • Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations • Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • MassCommute • Massachusetts Public Health Association • Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance • MassBike • MASSPIRG • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) • Merrimack Valley Planning Commission • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Neighbor to Neighbor • Northeastern University/Dukakis Center • Old Colony Planning Council • On the Move • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • Somerville Community Corporation • Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership • Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • WalkBoston



**Web:** [t4ma.org](http://t4ma.org) **Twitter:** [@T4MASS](https://twitter.com/T4MASS) **Phone:** 617.223.1655 **Email:** [info@t4ma.org](mailto:info@t4ma.org)

in our future, creating jobs for Massachusetts residents and ensuring economic opportunity in every corner of the Commonwealth.

As you consider several transportation financing proposals, do not be tempted to build us only half a bridge or part of a train track. We cannot realize our shared vision for our future with insufficient funds; that will force us to choose between getting our financial house in order, investing in our Gateway Cities, safely maintaining our system, or building for our future. All of these priorities must be funded to ensure that we are not back here in five years, pressing for the same investments.

It's time to move ahead. The time to invest is now. We look forward to working with you.

**Coalition Members:** Alliance for Business Leadership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Groundwork Lawrence • Fairmount Indigo Line Collaborative • Institute for Human Centered Design • LISC • Livable Streets Alliance • Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations • Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities • Massachusetts Communities Action Network • MassCommute • Massachusetts Public Health Association • Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance • MassBike • MASSPIRG • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) • Merrimack Valley Planning Commission • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Neighbor to Neighbor • Northeastern University/Dukakis Center • Old Colony Planning Council • On the Move • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • Somerville Community Corporation • Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership • Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • WalkBoston