

Performance and Asset Management Advisory Council

December 30, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA, 02133

The Honorable Joseph A. Boncore
Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 112
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable William M. Straus
House Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

Members of the General Court:

On behalf of the Performance and Asset Management Advisory Council, and in compliance with Chapter 46, Section 12 of the Acts of 2013 and as referenced in Chapter 6C, I am once again pleased to report on continued progress by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) toward integrated asset and performance management processes.

The COVID-19 pandemic is inextricably present in all reviews of 2020, and its impact extends far beyond the topic of this update. However, we can all take pride that the work of planning, designing, constructing, maintaining and operating Massachusetts infrastructure has continued in earnest amidst the challenges this year has presented.

Critical to achievement of our asset management goals is timely design and construction of capital projects. To sustain our capital delivery program, MassDOT adapted design processes to facilitate remote work, support online collaboration and enable virtual stakeholder engagement. Our construction teams worked with the contractor community to ensure personal protective equipment mandates and job site practices met applicable safety protocols. Amidst the crisis, MassDOT had one of the most successful years on record for project delivery, and the construction program continued uninterrupted to deliver transportation improvements that support the Massachusetts economy.

While this work advances the current capital plan, MassDOT is still looking ahead to ensure our transportation system meets the needs of tomorrow. The pandemic has caused traffic volumes and patterns to change as a result of telecommuting and social distancing. We have also seen the reimagining of local roadway space for the public good through the successful Shared Streets program. The pandemic has reminded us of the deep connection between our transportation system and the Commonwealth's vitality, and this reminder will fuel our collective energies as we emerge from the current crisis and refocus on the work to improve our transportation system.

In previous year's updates we have highlighted the needs of the state-owned, non-interstate roadway network. These roads connect us to school, work, friends, families, and commerce whether on foot, bike, car or transit. When MassDOT approaches a non-interstate paving project, the full use of the roadway is considered. Condition of non-interstate roadways were on a precipitous decline in the middle of the last decade, when the need was recognized by the and additional funds were made available in SFY 2019. This investment has manifested itself in improved conditions, though continued investment is necessary to maintain steady progress.

Performance and Asset Management Advisory Council

Substantial needs remain for the Massachusetts bridge inventory. The Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP) marshalled significant investment to repair and replace structures across the Commonwealth, though ABP's gains are projected to be lost by mid-decade at the present investment level. Massachusetts is 4th worst in the nation for the percentage of poor bridges (by area). The inability to program sufficient bridge projects and limited funding for bridge preservation are inhibiting meaningful progress toward condition targets to address the current backlog and stem further deterioration. Additional bridge investment is needed to address the clear needs to core transportation infrastructure.

2021 will bring the next Triennial Inspection of the Metropolitan Highway System (MHS). Every three years a consultant provides the department with an independent assessment of the MHS tunnels, roadways, bridges and facilities, which in turn guides investment of toll proceeds for capital investment. The previous report (2019) highlighted the need to advance rehabilitation projects for the Sumner, Central Artery North Area (CANA) and Prudential tunnels, and bridge projects for the I90/95 Interchange and Boston Extension of the I90.

Among these definitive state of good repair needs, MassDOT is also cognizant of the looming threat that climate change poses to long term infrastructure sustainability. The MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning is studying the risk of extreme weather to infrastructure and will quantify costs associated with the impacts. This work is critical to informed investments in resilient infrastructure.

In closing, MassDOT has continued to manage today and plan for tomorrow's infrastructure needs. Substantial state of good repairs needs remain and investment is necessary to preserve our current infrastructure so that it may continue to serve the Commonwealth in a resilient and sustainable future.

I hope the attached update is informative for your important work. The Council looks forward to remaining a resource for MassDOT, local governments, and the Legislature in the upcoming year.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia Leavenworth, P.E., Chair