



Massachusetts
Municipal
Association

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Proposed Resolution Supporting a Local-State-Federal Partnership to Address the Commonwealth's Transportation System Needs and Challenges (2020)

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Whereas, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts continues to experience growth in both population and employment, requiring a robust transportation infrastructure to move people and goods throughout the state and region and ensure a robust economy with opportunity for success in every corner of the state;

Whereas, municipalities must maintain over 30,000 miles of local roads, representing 90% of the roadways in the Commonwealth, in a state of good repair, and this responsibility is vital to our economy and to the safety of our residents and visitors;

Whereas, cities and towns are critically dependent on the state's Chapter 90 bond program to fund local road maintenance and repair needs;

Whereas, the Chapter 90 bond program has remained flat-funded at \$200 million annually since fiscal 2012, with the exception of an additional \$100 million bond authorization in fiscal 2015, and the cost of construction has increased due to inflation and demand for repairs over the same period;

Whereas, the purchasing power of Chapter 90 funds has declined by 25% over the past eight years to an inflation-adjusted \$149 million in fiscal 2020, while the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Capital Investment Plan has grown by 16.8% over the past two years, and Chapter 90 has fallen from 24.5% to 21% of the CIP;

Whereas, the Commonwealth's public transit infrastructure and service reliability are in urgent need of improvement, despite an investment of \$8 billion over five years in the

MBTA's capital program;

Whereas, a report found that Greater Boston has the worst rush hour traffic of among 60 urban areas across the United States;

Whereas, municipalities in every corner of the Commonwealth – from those that rely most heavily on the MBTA network, to those served by regional transit authorities, to those in rural areas without public transit options – demand innovative solutions to their transportation needs, which necessitates a multimodal and regional-equity approach to infrastructure and policy development;

Whereas, global climate change has led to an increase in severe weather events, including notably increased precipitation, which threatens the condition and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure;

Whereas, the transportation sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts, at 43% of total emissions as of 2016;

Whereas, the Baker-Polito Administration has over the past two years focused significant attention on Massachusetts' transportation challenges and needs through convening the Commission on the Future of Transportation and drafting a report on roadway congestion in the Commonwealth;

Whereas, Massachusetts has the second-lowest gas tax in New England, and the nine largest metropolitan areas in the nation outside of New England have implemented a form of congestion pricing to raise revenue and modify driver and rider behavior;

Whereas, the Commonwealth faces an immediate need for new sources of revenue to fund improvements to the state, local and regional transportation infrastructure and to invest in the accessibility, reliability and sustainability of our transportation systems;

Therefore, it is hereby resolved that the members of the Massachusetts Municipal Association support the following essential policy positions to ensure a strong local, state and federal partnership to address the needs of and challenges to the local and statewide transportation systems:

In the Area of Policy Development and Advocacy

- Municipal officials and the MMA should be active participants in state and federal policy development regarding transportation, which includes advocating for the House and Senate to pass bold transportation finance legislation before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session and participating in working groups with a diverse range of stakeholders to advance positions on transportation policy;
- Any transportation policy proposal must include a meaningful revenue component that is raised fairly and distributed equitably; and

In the Area of Assets and Infrastructure

- Multimodal transportation options should be developed to reflect the diverse needs for movement across the Commonwealth and in the surrounding region;

- The state should prioritize the underfunded repair and maintenance needs of 30,000 miles of locally owned roads and bridges by increasing Chapter 90 funds to \$300 million annually, adjusted for inflation, and the state should implement the Chapter 90 funding program by March 1 of each year to ensure that municipalities can solicit bids and begin construction in a timely manner and take advantage of the full construction season, which is why a multi-year bond authorization is critically important for planning, finance and operational reasons;
- The state should continue to fund targeted grant programs that support municipalities in financing specific road and bridge project needs, including the Complete Streets Program, the Municipal Small Bridge Program, the MassWorks Program, and programs to fund culvert replacement and repairs, municipal congestion relief, and locally owned state-numbered roads;
- State and federal agencies should continue to invest significant resources in improving and expanding the Commonwealth's public transit infrastructure, including the MBTA, commuter rail systems, bus services, ferries and other intermodal transit, and should consider regional equity in doing so;
- The MMA supports a full review of policy approaches to addressing road congestion, including congestion pricing, priority bus lanes, and managed bus lanes;
- The state should implement and fund the recommendations of the culvert and small bridge working group to streamline environmental permitting, revise engineering standards, and expand grant programs and other financial resources and technical assistance for cities and towns;
- State and federal government policymakers, alongside academia and private industry, should support the development of new technologies for more accessible, reliable and sustainable transportation;
- Municipal officials, state and federal government policymakers, state agencies, and private industry should support the planning and construction of transit-oriented development that situates new housing and businesses near public transit options; and

In the Area of Finance and Governance

- The MMA supports enactment of a transportation bond bill that includes a multiyear authorization for the Chapter 90 program of a minimum of \$300 million annually, indexed to grow with inflation, as well as renewed funding for state grant programs for targeted local transportation projects, and provides state funds to leverage, supplement, match or incentivize local property-tax-based investments in road, bridge and transportation maintenance and enhancements;
- The MMA supports an increase to the state gas tax to fund improvements to the Commonwealth's transportation systems, with an assurance that funds will be distributed equitably across the state;
- The MMA supports continued discussion on congestion pricing as a potential revenue source for transportation system improvements, raised and applied equitably; and

In the Area of the Environment

- State and federal agencies and lawmakers should continue to support efforts to make

- the Commonwealth's transportation assets resilient to severe weather events;
- The MMA supports the state's participation in the regional Transportation Climate Initiative, a 12-state and Washington, D.C., compact to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and end reliance on carbon-based transportation;
- State and federal agencies should support the electrification of public transit assets;
- Municipal officials, the MMA and regional planning and other organizations should promote the purchase of electric vehicles for municipal fleets and the installation of electric vehicle charging stations on municipal property;
- The MMA encourages policymakers to explore best practices to reduce the Commonwealth's generation of transportation-related carbon emissions and supports financial resources and technical assistance for cities and towns to help implement these practices; and

It is further resolved that a copy of these resolutions shall be provided to the governor and members of the General Court of the Commonwealth.

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