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ISSUE BRIEF

Update on Commuter Rail Initiatives

February 14, 2019

The Partnership is representing the needs of the 495/MetroWest region in several ongoing Commuter Rail Initiatives, including...

[State's Rail Vision Plan](#)¹

This project is intended to "identify cost-effective strategies to transform the MBTA's existing Commuter Rail system to better support improved mobility and economic competitiveness in the Boston region", and is poised to share potential new models of commuter rail service for consideration and feedback. The Partnership's Executive Director was appointed by MassDOT to serve on the [Advisory Committee](#)² for this effort, along with Rep. Carolyn Dykema, Congresswoman Katherine Clark's office, and a wide range of other commuter rail stakeholders.

Beyond our advocacy on the Advisory Committee, on Tuesday, Feb. 26 from 8:30am to 10am our Transportation Committee is holding a regional briefing on the state's Rail Vision project by Scott Hamwey, MassDOT's Manager of Transit Planning. Space is limited, so if interested in attending this briefing, register by emailing intern@495partnership.org.

Additionally, MassDOT is holding an open house³ on the Rail Vision Plan on Tuesday, March 5th from 4:30 to 7pm in the MBTA Board Room at 10 Park Plaza in Boston. The program will feature an overview of the process and key concepts as well as an opportunity for the public to learn about details of the seven service alternatives under consideration.

As part of the Rail Vision project, the MBTA is conducting an **online survey, intended to solicit feedback from non-commuter rail riders**; to take the survey, go to <https://mbtarailvisionsurvey.com>.

Framingham/Worcester Line Working Group

¹ <https://www.mbta.com/projects/rail-vision>

² <https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/projects/commuter-rail-vision/downloads/2018-12-11-railvision-advisory-committee-roster.pdf>

³ <https://www.mbta.com/events/2019-03-05/rail-vision-open-house>

MassDOT and the MBTA convened a representative group of stakeholders, including the Partnership, for the Framingham Worcester Line to provide input and perspective on issues involving that line. The Partnership is honored to work with Lieutenant Governor Polito, state officials, legislators, municipal officials, and other key stakeholders on this working group to improve commuter rail service and address the line's capital needs. To complement that state led effort, the Partnership is convening a roundtable of regional leaders to identify regional priorities for the Line as MassDOT explores the I-90 Allston project and future investments such as West Station.

[Commuter Rail Communities Coalition](#)⁴

The Partnership worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, with support from Transportation for Massachusetts, to **convene Mayors and Town Administrators / Managers from cities and towns served by the MBTA's Commuter Rail network.**

The Coalition has held two meetings and is planning to elect Co-Chairs, at least one Mayor and one Town Administrator/Manager - at the next meeting in March. The 495/MetroWest Region has been well-represented at meetings thus far with strong participation from regional Town Administrators, Managers, and with Mayor Spicer hosting the second meeting at the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority's offices in Framingham.

[East-West Passenger Rail Study](#)⁵

MassDOT is conducting this study to assess rail service alternatives along the Boston-Framingham-Worcester-Springfield-Pittsfield corridor. To provide regional input and perspective, the Partnership's Executive Director has also been appointed to that project's **[Advisory Council](#)**⁶. While this effort is just beginning, at the first meeting the Partnership pointed out the need to for any expanded service to work in concert with existing commuter rail service, and the need to work with Framingham and Ashland to address their at-grade crossings. There is a **[public meeting](#)**⁷ on this project on **Tuesday, March 12 from 6 to 8pm at the UMass Center at 1500 Main St. in Springfield.**

For more information on these commuter rail initiatives or to learn more about participating in the Partnership's work on behalf of 495/MetroWest, contact Paul Matthews, Partnership Executive Director, at (774)760-0495 x105 and paul@495partnership.org.

⁴ https://www.t4ma.org/commuter_rail

⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study>

⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/east-west-passenger-rail-study-advisory-committee>

⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/event/east-west-passenger-rail-study-public-meeting-1-2019-03-12t180000-0400-2019-03-12t200000-0400>