

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED FOLLOWING MAY 2, 2019

RE: Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Destination 2040*,
Development

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May 8, 2019

The Honorable Charles D. Baker
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
Boston, MA 02133

RE: **Comment on the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan regarding the Canton Interchange Project**

Dear Governor Baker:

Almost every day the communities of Canton, Dedham, Norwood, Walpole, and Westwood see increased commuter traffic spilling from I-95 onto Route 1, Route 1A, and Rt. 138. Ultimately, this traffic travels onto lesser side streets through neighborhoods with motorists seeking a quicker and less congested way to and from jobs in Boston or along the Route 128 corridor. This pass-through traffic chokes local roadways not designed for such use and leads to greatly increased care and maintenance than would normally be needed. The perception by residents of traffic clogged roads is now an obstacle to each town's ability to attract and grow business and to permitting additional housing, which are priorities of the Commonwealth.

Traffic backs up on I-95 and I-93 with commuters from as far away as Rhode Island and Cape Cod. Those cars that do not find their way through our communities sit idling on I-95 and I-93 as their vehicles spew harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

Local town officials have been working through the Boston MPO to add the I-95/I-93 interchange project to the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and after design is completed, the project needs funding. Computershare as a business located near the interchange, I am very concerned with the impact of congestion on my Computershare and the environment. There are many good reasons the project should go forward including improved safety, related economic development, and an improved environment.

The reconstruction of the Canton Interchange has been a priority of the Commonwealth and the communities in our region for decades. Millions have already been spent on design with the project being close to 75% design status. We believe it must be placed

on the Long Range Transportation Plan; *Destination 2040*, in order to maintain its standing as a project of regional significance.

The benefits of this project are numerous:

- This is a rare case of a highway project that will actually increase open space. Upon completion, more than 30 acres restored as open space and wetlands will be incorporated back into the Blue Hills Reservation.
- A bike path connecting the Route 128 Railroad Station and the University Station development to the Blue Hills Reservation and to Royall Street businesses will create increased commuter rail use and reduced vehicle dependence and pollution in the region.
- The cloverleaf design of the interchange is dated and unsafe; its hair pin turns have caused accidents that have resulted not only in serious personal injury and death, but also in the release of hazardous materials in an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC).
- Traffic congestion has reduced the air quality of the region and impeded the ability of the area communities to effectively compete for economic development, thereby costing our communities many millions of dollars in potential annual tax revenue.
- The current bridge structures over Route 128 are deteriorating and will need repair/replacement in the foreseeable future, costing money better dedicated to the permanent solution.
- The Route 128 Add-A-Lane Project has added travel and breakdown lanes along I-95 between the Route 9 and Route 24 Interchanges. Unfortunately, because of the chokepoint at the interchange the full impact of these improvements will never be realized until the Canton Interchange is reconstructed.

While the project stands on its own merits, it should be noted that it has been in the works for some time and we believe the time is now to add it to the Long Range Transportation Plan and ultimately to the Transportation Improvement Program for funding.

The Interchange was originally promised in 1972, when then Governor Sargent decided to abandon the Southwest Expressway plans to extend I-95 northward through the Route 128 corridor and into the City of Boston from the south.

In the 1990's the federal and state governments were committed to establishing the nation's first high-speed rail connection between Boston – Providence – New York – Washington D.C. The plans included a suburban stop at the Route 128/I-95 University Park Rail Station, which officials planned to rebuild along with a 2,500-car parking garage. The region's communities participated in a Task Force established to assist in the planning and permitting of these improvements. The communities insisted on and ultimately entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that among other terms stated that in exchange for the region's support for the proposed improvements that reduced

traffic congestion and pollution within the corridor, the then EOTC, MBTA and MassHighway signed a Memorandum of Understanding promising to design and reconstruct the I-93/I-95 Interchange by 2006. In truth, the preliminary 25% design and environmental impact studies only started well after 2006 had passed. We are still waiting for the design to be completed so the project can bid.

Therefore, for all the reasons described above, we ask for your support of the Project and we ask the Boston Region MPO members in the strongest manner possible to support the inclusion of the Canton Interchange Project on the Long Range Transportation Plan, *Destination 2040*. This region and in fact the entire Boston Metropolitan Area will benefit from a project that is in fact forty years overdue. We thank you in advance for your consideration, partnership and assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Cesso". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Cesso
US General Counsel

Cc: Senator Walter Timilty (Walter.Timilty@masenate.gov)
Representative William Galvin (William.Galvin@mahouse.gov)
Thomas O'Rourke, Neponset River Chamber (Tom@nrrchamber.com)
David Mohler (david.mohler@bostonmpo.org, eharvey@ctps.org)



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

May 16, 2019

David Mohler, Chairman
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

RE: *Destination 2040* – Long Range Transportation Plan – Route 4/225 Bedford Street and Hartwell Avenue – Major Infrastructure Project

Dear Chairman Mohler and Members of the Boston MPO:

We write to express our support for the Route 4/225 (Bedford Street) and Hartwell Avenue Project's continued inclusion in the MPO's Long Range transportation Plan: *Destination 2040*.

The Bedford Street (Route 4/225), Hartwell Avenue, and Wood Street Corridor is a gateway to Hanscom Air Force Base, Hanscom Airfield, Lincoln Labs, the Towns of Lexington and Bedford and the Hartwell Ave & Maguire Ave office parks. With its easy access to Interstate 95, the area has economic growth potential. It is also home to more than 10,000 employees on the Federal base, which is growing and investing in several expansions that are anticipated to create additional jobs.

However, the existing transportation infrastructure is severely limited with congestion and safety issues and needs to be upgraded to support future development. The proposed improvements include four travel lanes through most of the project area and three travel lanes along the southern portion of Hartwell, a sidewalk or multimodal path and bike lanes on both sides of the roadways; raised center medians; and reconstruction of several of the major intersections. The Town and businesses along the corridor have also been investing in running a public shuttle bus to help provide additional transportation options to and from Alewife as the area continues to grow.

This project dovetails with the Town's effort to turn this corridor into a vibrant community with access to employers, residences, retail, and recreation. The Town is in the midst of advancing a full rezoning of this area with an eye toward smart growth, increased density, and mixed-use development. This rezoning must be accompanied by transportation improvements in order to address resident concerns and succeed at Town Meeting.

The Town has invested resources to improve the existing conditions along the Hartwell Ave area with a significant focus being placed on safety, transit, and multi-modal transportation alternatives. In addition, the Town has invested almost \$9M in infrastructure improvements in anticipation of this project. However, the Town cannot complete the improvements and realize

the area's economic potential without the support of MassDOT and the MPO. Inclusion of this project in the LRTP is an important step in that direction.

As a key commuter route and access point to Interstate 95, this is a significant regional project and improvements to this corridor benefit those well beyond Lexington's borders. We wholeheartedly support Lexington in its effort to secure the needed funding for design because it is good for our districts and good for the regional economy. To that end, Representative Ciccolo initiated an operating line item in the House version of the FY2020 budget to allocate \$25,000 in additional design funds to help coordinate planning and design. That funding has passed the Massachusetts House of Representatives and is awaiting action by the Senate.

We ask that the MPO keep the Route 4/225 Bedford Street Hartwell Avenue Project in the Long Range Transportation Plan for inclusion in the TIP FY 2025-2029.

We appreciate your efforts to improve transportation for all in the Greater Boston Area.

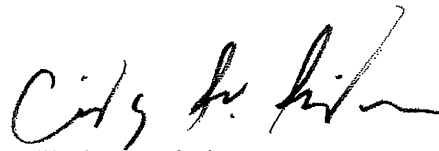
Sincerely,



Michelle L. Ciccolo
State Representative



Michael J. Barrett
State Senator



Cindy F. Friedman
State Senator

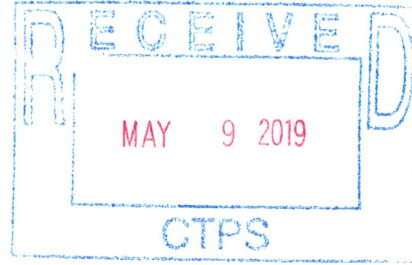


Kenneth I. Gordon
State Representative

cc: James Malloy, Town Manager Town of Lexington
Douglas Lucente, Chairman, Lexington Board of Selectmen
Sheila Page, Assistant Planning Director, Town of Lexington



200 West Cummings Park • Woburn, MA 01801 • 781-935-8000 • CummingsFoundation.org



May 7, 2019

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Mr. David Mohler, Chair
Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Mohler:

We reach out to you to express our strong support for the complete reconstruction of the I-93/I-95 Interchange (PROJIS #605605). As the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan, Universe of Projects, accurately states: "Many elements of the interchange are at the ends of their design lives."

We and so many other north suburban people are vitally concerned about the economic impact that chronic traffic congestion is inflicting on the community and surrounding towns. This project would open many new opportunities for economic growth not just in the immediate area, but throughout the region.

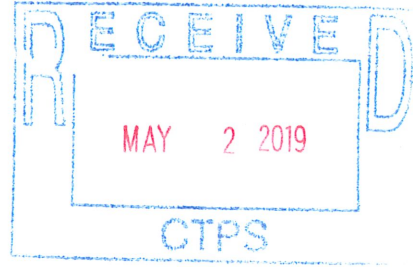
The redesign of the I-93/I-95 Interchange was studied carefully as early as 2007 in the I-93/I-95 Study Team you led. Having already waited 12 years since this most recent study, the region should not have to continue waiting before this significant project garners more attention and support.

Of course, we understand that these projects take many years to plan. In the short term, the temporary fixes identified in the 2007 I-93/I-95 Interchange Transportation Study as necessary to begin the interchange reconstruction, including the slip ramp onto 93 South from Washington Street via Cedar Street in Woburn, should be considered for immediate construction, as they are a necessary component to this project and will provide substantial immediate relief.

We appreciate your leadership at MPO and the continued effort to update our outdated infrastructure throughout the region.

Sincerely,

William S. Cummings, Founder



April 29, 2019

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Deputy Director

Mr. David Mohler, Chair
Boston Region MPO
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Mohler:

I reach out to you to express our strong support for the Bridge Replacement on Washington Street in Woburn. As the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan Universe of Projects accurately states: "The Washington Street Bridge is the central link in a north-south arterial system that serves the Wilmington-Woburn-Winchester industrial and commercial corridor."

This bridge was built more than 60 years ago and since that time, the city of Woburn and the surrounding communities have seen incredible growth. The Washington Street Bridge is a major cut-through for the North-South corridor in the region and should accordingly match the growth that the region has experienced.

This project will open many new opportunities for economic growth, not just in Woburn but throughout the region, that will be beneficial to both businesses and residents. The bridge will help address the chronic traffic congestion that burdens our communities.

I appreciate your leadership at MPO and the continued effort to update our outdated infrastructure throughout the region.

Sincerely,

William S. Cummings, Founder